MUST WE SIN?

Howard W. Sweeten

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MUST WE SIN?

A treatise of the sin question from the standpoint of reason and revelation

By

Howard W. Sweeten
Evangelist

Introduction by
Rev. L. L. Pickett, Wilmore, Kentucky

(Third Edition)

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By
Howard W. Sweeten
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INTRODUCTION

Sin! this is the problem of the ages. For this world there is no other. He who can solve the sin problem can relieve the burden of the race. He who can destroy sin can save the world. Thank God, a Savior is found, a sin-destroyer is at hand in the Person of Jesus Christ! "He shall save His people from their sins." But this necessitates the desire for salvation from sin, the yielding of heart, life and will to Him.

The trouble is, men have too little consciousness of sin—its heinousness, its exceeding sinfulness. Men have confused crime with sin and sin with crime. The writer remembers how years ago he read the confession of David, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51:5). I said, "No, David, you have sinned against society; against the home; against the family; against the race." But there the Scripture was, unchanged, written by inspiration; recorded in the word of truth —"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Accepting the record as inspired, I sought

its meaning, and soon saw that *all sin* is against God. You do not sin against men, only against your Maker, your Redeemer.

Let us see: A man commits murder. What is it? It is a crime, a violation of human law. He is tried by the courts and is sentenced to be hanged. As a crime, he has expiated his guilt. He cannot be punished twice for the same crime. But hold; he has also sinned against God, and God will judge him and sentence him to hell.

Now suppose he hates another; but dreads to face the courts and be hanged, so refrains from committing the act of murder. He has sinned but has not committed a crime; hence the courts have no case against him, but God has. "He that hateth his brother (his fellowman) is a murderer." And God's sentence hangs over him as though the deed had been done.

So with theft: A man may covet the money in a bank and watch his opportunity to burglarize the institution; but no suitable opportunity occurs. The law of man has no case against him; he has committed no crime; but before God he is a full-fledged thief. Sin lies in the heart, in the will, and is complete and entire there, without the act. "He that look-

eth to lust, hath committed adultery already." The law of man has no case; there is indeed no crime; but there is sin; full-fledged, horrible, soul-destroying sin. O, that men might realize the enormity of sin against a holy God!

Brother Sweeten has given us a valuable, true, searching, really a powerful book. Read it; circulate it; pray God to use it. And give the warning everywhere against the blighting, corrupting, God-defying thing we call SIN!

L. L. PICKETT.

PREFACE

For some time it has been in the mind of the writer to put into the hands of earnest, honest and candid seekers after light a plain and concise treatise on the all-important question, "Must we sin?"

When we look out upon the busy scenes of human life and activity, and remember that we are living in an age of hurry and hustle, we recognize the fact that the average person, whether he can or not, will not take time to delve into an exhaustive treatise of the sin question. Yet of all the questions in the world that need our eager, earnest investigation, there is none of such magnitude and importance as the question of sin. Upon this question hinges the happiness of individuals and nations, both here and hereafter. Sin is either conducive to happiness, or detrimental to happiness; and if upon the sin question hinges true happiness, we ought to know it, and govern ourselves accordingly.

Therefore, if we must sin, how much or how little? is a question of vital importance. And if provision is made to completely deliver us from all sin, it is imperative that we should know it.

We feel that in pleading the case of righteousness against sin, we are pleading a cause of greater importance than was ever pled in any earthly court. Sin is a grave and infinite offense, and is, therefore, punishable with a grave and infinite punishment. Sin has made every human being in the world the defendant that must appear before the Judge of all the earth to hear His decision as to their destiny, which is based solely and exclusively on the sin question. It is, therefore, the paramuont need of humanity to so order their lives that they will be in perfect harmony with the teachings of the "thus saith the Lord," which is the one source of authority on this subject.

What or how much God can do for a person is not left to a few church dignitaries, but to the Word of God. It is the object of the writer, therefore, to give a fair and impartial discussion of the subject in this little volume, both from reason and revelation, without fear or favor of any particular creed or denomination. If we are told we must sin, upon what is such a statement based? If we are told we need not sin, what is our authority for such a declaration?

We make no apology for presenting this little volume to a world already filled with

innumerable books; neither have we written its contents with the idea of a superior knowledge of the subject; nor have we attempted to treat the matter in any other than a concise and plain manner. We, therefore, urge the reader to give us a fair and unprejudiced hearing, that we may be mutually blest and profited as we study the question of the world's greatest malady, in the light of reason and revelation.

We remember that at one time a certain newspaper, commenting on the work of an evangelist, said, "He is neither handsome nor eloquent, but he has the happy faculty of telling the truth." If the same can be said of this volume, and it proves its point and convinces inquirers on the subject, and is a blessing to souls, we will be gratified, and amply repaid for all our efforts. Nothing would please the writer more than to know that his humble efforts to turn souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, had met with success. To this end we ask the reader to follow us carefully and prayerfully through its contents, and earnestly to try to ascertain the correct solution of the question, "Must we sin?"

HOWARD W. SWEETEN.

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

While we are penning the lines of this little volume, our nation is in a mighty conflict for liberty and humanity. The fight is on; we are in the midst of the most gruelling and terrible war the world has ever known; the scripture, "Nation shall rise against nation," is being fulfilled, without a doubt; and thus the terrible conflict threatens to involve all the nations of the earth, and has already taken on such magnitude as to be called "the world war."

From the time that sin befell the human family, the seeds of strife have been sown broadcast in the world, until, look where you will, in every nook and corner of the earth, you will find discord and friction. It began with righteous Abel and wicked Cain, and from thence on down to the present, history reveals page after page of contention and sorrow. Who can picture the conflicts be-

tween individuals; the political conflicts; the scenes of rebellion and revolution; the struggle to obtain and maintain certain governmental rights and territorial boundaries? Who can picture the sorrows of domestic life, or even the sectarian prejudice that has produced religious division, until, undoubtedly, many times God's work has been hindered, and the Holy Spirit grieved by the lack of harmony among the professed followers of the living God?

What rebellions, and insurrections, and conflicts are recorded on the pages of both sacred and profane history! The thunders of the artillery of one battle have scarcely died away, until another great struggle is upon us; so that the earth has become reddened with the blood of many wars, and the years of universal peace among the nations are greatly exceeded by the years of national strife.

Our own country, a peace-loving nation, has had, on an average, a war about every twenty-two years; while thirty-three years is about the longest period in which we have been blest with national peace. The present great war (the world war) is no doubt the

greatest conflict of all time; yet great as it is, and much as may depend upon its results, there is, and has been, a conflict of greater magnitude waging upon the earth for six thousand years, without a single moment of truce. This surpasses the great *world* war; in fact, all wars combined cannot compare from any standpoint with this conflict. It is called "the conflict of the ages," and very properly so, for it was launched in the Garden of Eden, and outweighs all wars combined, in length of time, in relation to numbers involved, and in the matter of final results. This is seen by the fact that all the wars of the world have involved only a comparatively small portion of the earth's population, and only a nation now and then, here and there; but the conflict, to which we refer, has laid its gory hands upon every soul ever born into the world, and three worlds are vitally concerned: heaven, hell and earth. Here our struggles are limited in results to certain governmental rights, indemnities, and territorial boundaries; but upon the result of this great conflict of the ages, the fight with sin, hinges our eternal destiny for

weal or woe, for life or death, for heaven or hell.

No man upon earth can be neutral. "He that is not with me is against me," says Jesus; and the very fact that thousands of people are indolent, idle, and indifferent, doing nothing for God, brands them as allies of Satan and children of hell. Thus you will observe in the case of the man in the parable of the talents, who returned the one talent, that he was called an unprofitable servant; bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth. What had he done? Was he a sinner above all others? Certainly not. He had only done all that any man need do to be lost. What was it? Nothing. Doing nothing has been, and will be, the cause of the damnation of many souls.

If there is a God (and I do not say *if* because I doubt his being, but merely to make the point logical), with moral attributes such as our Bible teaches, and such as we believe Him to possess, it is plainly evident there is something in the world that God never made; something that is a disturbing element; that

is rebellious against His kingdom and government; that is anarchistic in principle; that is not subject to the law of God. It is the cause of every sorrow, every heartache, every disappointment, every defeat of righteousness, and is the bottom of all the world's troubles. It made a devil out of an archangel; it crucified God's only begotten Son; and that something, God, in His infinite wisdom, has pleased to call S-I-N, SIN.

You and I, dear reader, have never seen a world like God made; all that our poor mortal eyes have ever been privileged to look upon has suffered from the curse of the dreadful malady of sin. We have never seen a man as God originally made him. All the human family we have ever seen has been cursed by sin. They are subject to aches and pains, distorted by disease, bent by age, and are destined soon to wither and die.

When God made the world, He made it pure and holy; man was holy; hence the world was happy. Man walked in sweet fellowship with his Maker, and basked in the smile of his Creator. There was no antagonism; nothing foul nor unclean; no friction in

all of God's creation; nothing grating nor discordant. The world was at peace, and all creation in loving harmony. The land indeed was delightsome; its valleys were carpeted with velvet green, and its hillsides were decked with beautiful, thornless vegetation; every tree that grew in its fertile soil was pleasant to look upon, while trees whose fruits were good for food grew in abundance. The tree of "the knowledge of good and evil" grew in the midst of this Edenic Paradise.

At this period in our world's history, you might have sought from the river to the ends of the earth for misery, pain or guilt, and found only holiness, happiness and harmony. But alas! It did not long remain in this Edenic state. It was soon invaded by a subtle and powerful foe; and by one man, we are told in the Book, sin entered into the world, and "death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Sin is an infinite malady; and undoubtedly had its existence before the foundation of the world. Somewhere out in the great eternity sin evidently had its origin; possibly, owing to the fact that God endows His intel-

ligent creatures with volition, and that whatever is susceptible to use is susceptible also to abuse, a being chose disobedience to his Creator and fell from the heights of holiness to the depths of sin.

There are many things which we do not know; perhaps, because it is not necessary for us to know them, and because they are beyond our finite conception; hence, no man knows the exact location of heaven or hell, though they both exist and have a definite location; for there can be no *place* without location; and Jesus said in regard to heaven, "I go to prepare a *place* for you" (Jno. 14: 2). Of hell, the rich man said, "Send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this *place* of torment" (Luke 16: 28).

Though God has clearly revealed the existence of both heaven and hell, yet for some cause, in His infinite wisdom, He has not revealed their exact location. Perhaps it is because such a revelation would not make the motive for repentance any stronger, and perhaps because if He should tell us its exact

location, our acquaintance with space outside the earth is so limited, we would know very little, if any more, than we do at the present.

So, likewise, with the origin of sin; our knowledge of events before the foundation of the world is decidedly limited. Whether sin had its origin with Lucifer, or away back ages before, we do not know any more than we know where eternity had its beginning; it is beyond our sphere of thought, and the only way possible for us to know exactly how, when, and where it began is by divine revelation; and God, for some wise purpose, has seen fit to make no such revelation to His creatures, as the knowledge of its beginning is of little consequence. All that we are, or need to be, concerned about, is its origin upon earth, and its effects upon our present and future being.

The Scripture reveals the fact that a being called Satan rebelled against God and His government, and being cast away, encountered Adam and Eve in the Garden, and succeeded in beguiling them into like disobedience. Thus by the disobedience of this man,

sin entered the sacred precincts of the beautiful Garden; the occupants were driven from their happy abode; the beautiful Garden became a place of thorns and thistles; the earth, which had basked in the smile of its Creator, was now blackened by the curse of sin; and in less than fifteen hundred years, owing to the increased spirit of disobedience, God was compelled to destroy with one great deluge all that He had made.

Today every cold wintry blast, every terrific storm, every volcanic eruption, every barren field, every tearing briar, all combine in awful accusation against man and his unholy deeds. Every breaking heart, every distorted frame racked with pain, every disappointed life, every defeated soul, owes all its sorrow to *sin*.

One writer, speaking of sin and its origin, says, "Sin is an immense river running through the secret channels of hell; it broke out upon this world in the Garden of Eden. Ever enlarging, this river flows on around the world; no flowers grow on its banks; no foliage waves beside its murky tide; everlasting lightning pencils every angry wave,

and hell's terrific thunders bound from bank to bank with awful crash. Surely no one would visit this awful place; but alas! its shores are lined from source to mouth with human wretches. They crowd to plunge into the fearful tide; all sexes, all colors, all conditions, all classes. The mother decks her daughter in the height of fashion, and side by side they plunge into the stream. Into this current the young man, thoughtless and laughing, runs. The old man follows, with his hoary locks streaming in the wind like the shredded rigging of a storm-ridden ship; he pauses a moment on the verge, but is soon hurled into the seething tide." What a picture this writer has given us! We need only to look about us on every hand and behold the dire results of sin.

It is an established fact that sin is here. It is not a theory, not a fancy, not an allegory, but an awful, indisputable fact, Christian Science and a few other heresies to the contrary, notwithstanding. Laugh at it all you will, deny it all you will, yet it is here in all its gory criminality; its fruits are manifest daily in an indisputable manner. If

there is no such thing as sin, what is it that has reddened the earth with crime? If there is no sin, what is it that causes that vast army of one hundred thousand men every year to fill drunkards' graves and an alcoholic hell; and to go to the dreadful judgment to meet that God who has said, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God"? If there is no sin, what causes that army of fallen girls to bury their faces in their hands and weep for the days of their virtue and purity? From whence does all the brawling strife, contention, malice, enmity and hatred proceed, if not from sin? Reason all you will, sin is here both in principle and practice. It stalks through our streets at mid-day, and mows down its victims by countless thousands, victims who are helpless to resist its power. As light is universal, though some may deny it, shut their eyes and refuse to admit any of it, so the malady of sin is universal, though we may dispute and deny its existence. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). And as the apostle writes to the Ephesians, we "are all by nature the children of wrath"

(Eph. 2:3), not by a long life of transgression, *but by nature.*

Thus sin is a universal, inherent malady, coming to all of Adam's posterity through the offense in the Garden of Eden. Hence, Paul writes to the Romans, "Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5:18), and "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). And as by grace we are separated from the devil and joined to God, so by sin we are separated from God and joined to the devil. Sin is no legitimate part of our being; it is a poisonous malady, a fungus growth, an abnormal condition, a parasite of the soul, a moral deformity planted in our common father Adam, through his Edenic transgression, and inherited by all his unfortunate posterity.

Of all the afflictions upon earth, there is none equal in gravity to the plague of sin upon the soul. What leprosy is to the body, sin is to the soul, and more. What insanity is to the mind, sin is to the soul, and more.

It is more dire in its results than cancer, more deadly than tuberculosis, more contagious than smallpox. The fact that the whole world is contaminated by the offense of one man speaks of its dreadful nature. The fires of hell remind us of its evil; the horrors of conscience remind us of its guilt; the dying Savior reminds us of its gravity; while the hardness of men's hearts tells us in unmistakable terms of its dreadful effect. We ought no more to envy the sinner his sinful and worldly pleasure, than we would a man his cancer or leprosy. Who would envy a man his money, if that money were to cast his soul into hell? Who begrudges a man his entertainment at the theater, his caresses in the ball-room, his fine clothes, his daily luxuries, his hours of revelry and frolic, if these are purchased at the infinite price of his soul?

Summing up the matter of sin as a whole, and taking into consideration the effect it produces, and the inevitable result it brings, we cannot but say: It were better for one to be an invalid all his life, and to be thrown upon the mercy of the world as an object of charity, than to be afflicted with sin, and

finally cast by an infinite hand into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Yea! he had better be an idiot, and be unconditionally saved, than to be an intelligent, responsible creature, and refuse to break with sin and be cast into hell.

Let the reader bear in mind that the malady and curse of sin are upon the race; sin is on our hands, and some disposition must be made of the matter. To ignore it will not settle it; to ridicule it does not evade it; in fact, a question of such magnitude and importance must not be evaded, we must inevitably face it; why not now before it is too late? True, there are other questions in life that demand our attention; our education, our business, our moral and social standing, our health, our duties as citizens, and so on; but after all, if we succeed in achieving success in all these things, and fail to properly solve and settle the sin question, our lives have been sadly and woefully misspent; for upon this question hinges not temporal and material prosperity and happiness, but eternal destiny.

To this purpose, therefore, the pages of this volume are prayerfully dedicated, that we may know the truth concerning the most important question in our lives, and find a proper solution to it, for upon this hangs our destiny, both here and hereafter.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS SIN?

Inasmuch as it is our purpose, in the following pages of this book, to discuss the sin problem, it will be necessary to first give the reader a proper analysis of the subject. "What is sin?" and "What is not sin?" and "How shall we deal with it?" are questions of vital importance. No first class physician would undertake to prescribe a remedy for a patient until he had first properly diagnosed the malady. In order to know the remedy, we must first know the disease; hence, the caption of this chapter, "What is sin?"

At this particular time, our reader's attention is called, not to the remedy for sin, nor to the possibility of deliverance from sin, but merely to the nature and effects of sin. Sin is twofold in its existence, actual sin and inherent sin. One denotes action, the other condition; one is what we do, the other is what we are. Actual sin is defined in 1 John 3:4, "Whosoever committeth sin trans-

gresseth also the law: for sin is a transgression of the law." Here sin is defined in its actual sense. Actual sin consists of an act of transgression of God's law. Inherent sin is the sin principle, sometimes referred to as original sin, moral defilement, depravity and similar terms. One writer expresses actual sin as the "shoots of sin," and inherent sin as "the roots of sin." Sin, therefore, is not confined to action alone; but is a dark, crooked, wicked, rebellious, devilish nature, inherited by all of Adam's posterity as a result of his fall in the Garden of Eden. Inherent sin is clearly defined in such Scriptures as Eph. 2:3. "All by nature the children of wrath." Nothing could make us the children of wrath but sin; yet, this we are, says the apostle, *"by nature."* In referring to the same thing in Rom. 7:17 he calls it "the sin that dwelleth in me;" which is clearly and distinctly separate in character from actual sin, in that one denotes inherent principle, and the other volitional action. In thus describing sin, we are in perfect harmony with the teaching of all orthodox churches, as will be noted by the

following extracts culled from the creeds of some of the leading denominations.

We quote from the "Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly," published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, page 5, question 14, "What is sin?" Answer. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God." Thus we have the twofold nature of sin expressed in the *"trangression of"* and *"conformtiy unto"* the law of God. On page six, question eighteen, "Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate wherein man fell?" Answer: "The sinfulness of that estate wherein man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all the actual transgressions which proceed from it."

Thus the Presbyterians acknowledge the twofold nature of sin in the expressions, "the corruption of his whole nature," and "with all the transgressions that proceed from it."

This catechism goes on further to say: "Question sixteen. Did all mankind fall in Adam's transgression? Answer: The cove-

nant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression." This is not only a portion of the catechism, but better still, is in perfect accord with the teaching of the "Thus saith the Lord," which is in fact, the only authority.

The "Bible Class Catechism," published by the American Baptist Publication Society of Philadelphia, also interprets the sin question in like manner. On page thirteen, question forty-five, "What is sin? Answer: Sin is any want of harmony in our hearts and lives with the revealed will of God." Here is the double nature of sin recognized again in the expression "hearts" (inward condition) and "lives" (outward action). The heart is the seat of the affections; its condition determines our character; as is indicated by such Scriptures as Prov. 23:7, "As he thinketh in his heart so is he," and Prov. 4:23, Mark 7:21-23 and others. "Out of the heart proceed the issues of life." A man is never any better than his heart; the heart is the barometer to both moral and spiritual character.

But to further discuss this catechism. Question forty-six. "What was the effect of Adam's sin upon himself? Answer: His apostasy from God was complete, and in his nature was no restoring principle." Question forty-seven. "How did this affect his posterity? Answer: They inherited a disposition of alienation from God, man's moral nature being vitiated at birth, and in consequence all mankind are now sinners (Rom. 5:12, Rom. 3:9)."

Before leaving the matter of orthodox teaching on this subject from the standpoint of church creeds, let us briefly note what the Methodist have to say on the subject. We quote from the joint catechism of the M. E. Church and the M. E. Church, South, published by Jennings & Graham, page thirty-six, question one hundred and fourteen. "What is sin? Answer: Sin is any violation of God's law, or any lack of conformity thereto." Here again we see the acknowledgment of its two-fold nature as taught by other denominations and the Word of God. Investigation might be carried further, but it is useless to do so, for we would find that both creeds and scripture teach practically the same, and that in

reminding the reader of this fact, we only wish him to know that the truth recorded on these pages is perfectly orthodox and sound.

Webster, who is an accepted authority in defining terms, also says sin is "a transgression of God's law." Here is sin in the actual sense. He also declares it is "moral deficiency in character." Here it is in being or principle; the first denoting the conduct of a volitional creature in transgressing God's law, as defined in 1 John 3:4; the latter denoting inherent character, as defined in Rom. 7:17, and in other places. It is useless to quote further authorities, for all are in harmony in regard to this matter. We think, therefore, that no apology is necessary in presenting a truth so universally taught and accepted.

Sin is not only disobedience to God's commandments, but is a polluted condition of the soul as well, it is hell's narcotic, Satan's hypnotic power, and carries in itself that which destroys a man's better judgment and sensibilities; so that a man can sin and laugh about it; sin and brag about it; he can use the name of the very God that holds the breath he breathes, in blasphemy, apparently utterly re-

gardless of the fact that God has said, "I will not hold him guiltless that taketh my name in vain."

Standing on the verge of perdition, sin enables us to take the few remaining days God has given us in which to repent, and use them in sinning the more against Him. So hypnotic is the power of sin that men, under its control, are made to prefer wrong to right, wickedness to righteousness, drunkenness to sobriety, darkness to light, death to life and hell to heaven.

It carries with it great refractive power, that is, power to make wrong seem right, lust is interpreted to be love, brutishness is considered manly, and vulgarity is made to seem funny. Oh, how it blinds and hypnotizes. "Are you aware, sinner," asked the great evangelist Chas. G. Finney, "that you have made God your enemy, and have you thought how terrible a thing this is? If you were in any measure dependent upon your fellowman, you would not like to make him your enemy." "The student of this college," he continues, "is careful not to make the faculty, or anyone of them his enemy. The child has the

same attitude in regard to his parent. Now consider what you are doing toward, God who holds your breath, your life, your very destiny in His power; let Him withdraw His hand and you will sink into hell of your own gravity. On a slippery steep you stand, and the billows of damnation roll below. Oh, sinner! Are you aware that when you lie down at night, with your weapons of rebellion against Him in your hands, His blazing eye is upon you; are you aware of this?" Continuing he draws the following descriptive picture of the deceitfulness of sin. "Eternity," says he, "so vast, and its issues so dreadful, yet the sinner drives furiously to hell as if he were on the high road to heaven! And all this only because he is infatuated with the pleasures of sin for a season. At first view, he seems really to have mistaken hell for heaven; but, on a closer examination, you see it is no real mistake of the intellect; he knows very well the difference between hell and heaven; but he is practically deluding himself under the impulses of his mad heart! The mournful fact is, he loves sin, and after it he will go! Alas, alas! so insane is he that he rushes headlong to

his own damnation, just as if he were in pursuit of heaven!"

We would deem it a great calamity if insanity should invade our home, and one of our family should become the victim of its dreadful consequences; yet, it would not be amiss to say the consequences of insanity would be a blessing compared to the final consequences of sin. Insanity is a mortal affliction, and when this mortal shall put on immortality, will be no more; but sin is an immortal malady, and its consequences never end. Sin does not spring from a diseased brain, but from a defiled heart; therefore, death cannot cure it, and the resurrection will only bring it forth to everlasting shame and contempt, and hell will be its eternal abode. The fact is, sin is a type of insanity, it is moral insanity, and may be clearly recognized by the conduct of its victims. If a man in the physical world should act as though he had no physical wants, and make provision for none, we would not hesitate to pronounce him crazy; yet, this is exactly what the sinner does every day in regard to the needs of his soul; he acts

as if he had no soul to consider, he regards not the pleasures of heaven or the horrors of hell; he acts as if he had never heard of the judgment, and as if he had no responsibility whatever to his God. All these facts are disregarded in his mad infatuation with sin.

We fear that, as intelligent creatures, we do not look upon sin with proper gravity. It is usually looked upon as a light, indifferent something, the effects and results of which amount to very little one way or another; while the facts in the case are, that sin is an open insult to Almighty God, and every time you break His commandments you invite His unmitigated wrath.

We recently clipped from the *Herald of Holiness* the following, which indicates the average person's attitude toward sin: "It is related that after a sermon by a distinguished minister, dealing most pointedly with sin, one of the church officers visited the pastor and remonstrated as follows: 'We do not want you to talk as plainly as you do about sin, because if our boys and girls hear you talking so much about sin they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mis-

take if you will, do not speak so plainly about sin.' The pastor took down a small bottle of strychnine, marked "poison,' and showed it to his visitor, saying, 'I see what you want me to do. You want me to change the label. Now, suppose I take this label off and substitute another, say, "Essence of Peppermint," do you not see what happens? The milder you make your label the more dangerous you make the poison." ' Jeroboam changed the label and the more easily led Israel into the sin of idolatry. Sin is the same deadly poison, whatever label you put on it, but the milder you make the label the more likely people are to be beguiled."

Having thus called the reader's attention to the nature of sin, there yet remains the difficult task of distinguishing sins from mistakes. From this on, therefore, we will deal with the question of actual sin, and try to determine the solution to the question of the title. It is therefore necessary to draw a definite conclusion as to the difference between sins and mistakes. As one writer says, "Is everything some folks oppose sin, because they oppose it? How far may a man be entitled

to use his own intelligence and conscience under the light of the Word? Is one man's judgment the final appeal for another? There is no safe guide but the Word." "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet." To be guided in any other way means interminable loss, blindness, folly and trouble. Hold steadily to what God's Word directs and you will go straight. I would like to please every good man, but to do so I would need to have long hair, wear a broad-brimmed hat, keep two Sabbaths, be baptized in all conceivable ways, with all kinds of elements, eat three meals a day, do without breakfast, drink no coffee, smell no perfume, eat no meat, wear soiled collars and cuffs, never shave, shave every day, kneel in prayer, stand in prayer, lie on my face in prayer, never smile, smile all the time, never criticize, find fault with all who differ with me, have no doctor when sick, use all intelligent means of recovery, fast, never fast. Lord, to whom shall I go to get out of such a mess? Thou hast the words of eternal life. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Happy are we that God has not left us in such a tangle. "The path of

the just is as a shining light." "In him is no darkness at all." The narrow way is a straight way. The whole matter culminates then in the question, "What is the element in our actions that makes them sins, and what element prevents them from being sins?" This brings us to the discussion of chapter three, "Sins vs. Mistakes."

CHAPTER III

SINS VS. MISTAKES

Many honest people are led to believe they are sinners, and lower the standard of Christian living to a level of every day sinning and repenting, and repenting and sinning, for no other reason than that they do not properly consider the distinction between a sin and a mistake. Before the question of whether or not we must sin can be intelligently answered, it will be necessary to know what is sin and what is not sin, and what is the element in our conduct that gives it character; where innocence and ignorance end and responsibility and guilt begin; what is sin and what merely a mistake.

An honest man never tries to excuse himself in ignorance, but always asks for the facts in the case, and governs himself accordingly; if therefore, we are able, by God's help, to bring to the reader some truth in this chapter which will enable one to take courage, and press on to better things, do not

refuse to see that which will ultimately be to your best and highest good.

For your encouragement, then, let us start this discussion, by frankly admitting that mistakes are not sins, and sins are not mistakes. It is, and always has been, a conceded fact that the motive back of every volitional act determines its character, and thus many serious and possibly grievous mistakes are made that cannot essentially be sin, because the motive which prompted the action was not of such a purpose as to give it the character necessary to make it a sin, and thus properly be nothing other than a mistake.

God, therefore, who looks not upon the outward appearance but is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, will also judge His creatures accordingly; for intention is the element in all our conduct which gives it character.

It is vitally important that we should know what are sins and what are mistakes. The apostle John, as we have already seen, defines actual sin, which is the theme of our discussion, as being a transgression of God's law; to say, therefore that we must sin, is to

say we must transgress His law. Surely no one will insist that you must be a breaker of God's commandments every day. Any individual who is a citizen of any nation of the world, and who goes around constantly and blatantly bragging that he breaks the laws of his country every day, in thought, word and deed, I feel sure would soon find himself ostracized from decent, respectable, and law-abiding citizens, and be looked upon by them as a law breaker, an outlaw, an anarchist against the government of his country; such an unruly individual, undoubtedly, ought to be in jail or in the penitentiary for the good of the general public.

Did you ever hear people complaining, and in great distress over the fact that they were citizens of a certain commonwealth, and just could not keep from breaking the laws of their government, in fact had to break them daily in thought, word, and deed? No! No!! No!!! Such people cannot be found anywhere in the world; any man who breaks the laws of his country either hangs his head in shame or keeps the matter under cover as much as possible; such an individual is never

seen going around bragging about it. For such conduct, for such foolish talk, for such inconsistency, for such public acknowledgment of disregard for law and government, for such blatant bragging of anarchy, we must resort to God's kingdom and government, and lo, here they are in great numbers. "Just can't help sinning every day." What is sin? A transgression of God's laws. Therefore they are telling us, "We just can't keep from breaking God's laws every day." Yet God says plainly His laws are not grievous. Be it said to our shame, if it is true, that we can be better citizens of an earthly commonwealth than we can of a Divine kingdom. If you can be an honorable, upright, law abiding citizen of the United States, why can you not, when born again and made a citizen or the kingdom of God, be law abiding? Why must you, upon becoming a child of God, begin by disregarding discipline and law and becoming an anarchist and rebel? Reader, if you are knowingly transgressing God's law every day, do not longer deceive yourself, you are not a Christian, but a sinner, for "Whosoever is born of God doth not

commit sin" (1 John 3:9). But "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, for sin is a transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

The reader may inquire, "Does not everyone sometimes do wrong?" We answer, "Perhaps there are none but what at times do err, and possibly do seriously wrong."

"Then are these wrongs not sins?" "They cannot always properly be so interpreted, because the motive which prompted the action must necessarily be considered, for it is this that gives character to the act." Many people are thus disheartened and discouraged under pressure of incidents in their lives, which they were led to believe were sins, but which in fact were only errors or mistakes. May we not discriminate between an innocent offense and a wilful transgression? Is there no difference in their character? Let us see; it is not misleading to say that that which is sin under one circumstance, may not be sin under another, though the act itself be identically the same. Let us illustrate: You, reader have a neighbor, a friend, who becomes violently ill in the night. You are called to his bedside to administer to his needs. In giving the medicine

to your friend, by mistake you give him the wrong kind; it proves to be a deadly poison, and in spite of the heroic efforts of physician and friends, in the course of a few hours the man dies. He is dead. Who killed him? You did. You administered the fatal drug, and beyond all question you only are responsible for his death. You are broken-hearted over your terrible mistake, and have the pity and sympathy of all who know the facts in the case. But are you a murderer? Are you to be hanged for crime? Does the Commonwealth arrest you and prosecute you as a vicious criminal? Certainly not. Why? Because the character of the motive back of the act was not of a nature to make you a murderer or criminal; it was a mistake, a serious one, but no person would call you a murderer. But suppose we now have the same thing to happen again only we reverse the intention. With a wicked and malicious intention you administer the same poison, knowing it to be poison, yet hoping to evade the law under the pretense that it was a mistake. You might deceive the people, and still retain their sympathy, you might evade prosecution by pretending it was an acci-

dent; but God, who saw the intention, and wicked and wilful purpose, brands you now as a murderer. Why? Because the purpose or intention in your conduct made its character.

We once had the same truth illustrated by a friend of ours, who relates the following: "An evangelist, living in one of the western states, came home for a few days' rest between meetings. One day, while working in the garden, hoeing some beans, he allowed his son, a little tot of perhaps three or four years, to play in the garden with his little garden tools. After hoeing all the way down one row of beans, the father stopped to rest, and looked back over his work. But now, imagine his surprise to find that the son had been hoeing also, and was cutting all the beans down as well as the weeds. Yet when he saw the father looking at him, innocently said, "Papa, I'se heppin too." This was a serious mistake, but no wilful transgression, and no evil intention as is seen from the fact of his innocence and freedom from any condemnation whatsoever.

Mr. Wesley, I believe, said that sinless per-

fection was a term he never used. He distinguished sins from mistakes by the terms voluntary and involuntary sins. Far be it from the writer of this little volume to class himself with such a man, either in intellect or piety, or take issue with one evidently so far his superior; but we do feel like saying that we prefer to call what he calls "involuntary sin," mistakes; and offer the following reasons for so doing. First. All sin is voluntary. If involuntary action is sin, then the Bible is a hard book to understand, and seems to contradict itself in many places. We know that no man is infallible and, there is no man but what may, and probably does, involuntarily transgress at times. If this is sin in the proper sense, then John is mistaken when he says: "Whosoever is born of God doeth no sin." (R. V.) For everybody makes mistakes and does therefore involuntarily transgress. But involuntary acts we prefer to call mistakes, which they properly are. If involuntary acts are sins, and we do all at times, perhaps involuntarily transgress, then we are all of the devil, God has no children at all, for John says that "Whosoever com-

mitteth sin is of the devil." Beyond doubt, there are none but what involuntarily transgress at times, hence the constant need of the atonement for involuntary and unknown transgressions, which in the proper sense are mistakes, and not of the same character as that sin which is known and voluntary. There are no doubt thousands who would not knowingly be disobedient to God: they love Him, honor Him, serve Him, and yet because of mental incapacity or physical infirmities do at times involuntarily hinder His purpose and will concerning them. I cannot believe they are sinners; I recognize them as Christians, *saved from their sins.* Sin when voluntary puts us under condemnation, but mistakes bring no condemnation, but rather a consciousness of our frailty, our humanity, our limitations and our weaknesses, and produce a spirit of humility, and a purpose to profit by our failures of the past. Again, if involuntary action is sin of any kind, John is surely mistaken when he says, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin;" for inasmuch as all are at times in-

voluntary transgressors the blood does not cleanse us, as he states, from *all* sin.

In discussing this question of being able to live above sin, we would therefore modify our words so as not to leave the reader under the impression that we are advocating an absolute perfection of Christian character, but are contending that it is the duty and privilege of every child of God to live on a plane above wilful and known transgression, which is sin. We cannot be perfect in all points, perhaps as Jesus, the God man. But we can say like Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:3), "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a *perfect heart,* and have done that which is good in thy sight." Oh for a clear conception, and a definite discrimination between sins and mistakes. Sin is the product of our moral nature; mistakes are the products of our physical infirmities, and mental incapacities. Sin to be properly accounted sin is voluntary, mistakes are always involuntary. Sin is always accompanied by condemnation and guilt; mistakes are followed by regrets, embarrassment and humiliation, but never

guilt. Sin causes us to forfeit our Divine fellowship and adoption, and breaks our communion with God; but a mistake does none of these. A man may make mistakes and still be justified and reconciled to God; but he can never sin and do so. While there is a distinct difference between voluntary action (sin) and involuntary action (mistakes), they both alike need the ever present and atoning blood of Jesus.

We note that in the Old Testament provision is made for sins of ignorance. (Lev. 4:27, 28). "Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge." Exactly. "If it come to his knowledge," for if there is no knowledge of his transgression there can be no intelligent offering made for it; but if it come to our knowledge then we can no longer ignore the provision made for it. Immediately, when it comes to our knowledge that we have erred, we should humble ourselves at His feet, who taught us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses."

But what if the offence never comes to our knowledge? In the first place, the involuntary transgression, or mistake, for such it is,

inasmuch as we have no knowledge of it, does not take on the character of wilful sin, does not produce guilt, does not mar our union with God, all of which actual sin does. In the next place provision is made for all involuntary transgression; we were about to say unconditional cleansing is provided, but it happens to be conditional. What is the condition? "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin." If we evade the light, dodge the issue, no provision is made for us, but to take the inevitable consequence of our sins. Hence, in walking in the light we have met the condition of constant cleansing, and the atonement avails for our involuntary transgressions or mistakes which are the products of ignorance and not wilful transgression which is sin. Thus we are provided with a full and complete and continual justification. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, actual, inherent, outward, inward and unknown, great and small, public and secret; *all* sin, provided we walk in the light. Thus the constant need of the blood to

cover our mistakes, blunders, and failures, which are the product of mental limitation and physical infirmities, but not the product of an evil purpose. Reader, let not Satan defeat you by making you think a mistake is a sin. By all means, however, be careful not to label your sins mistakes, and thus deceive your own soul through dishonesty with yourself. You cannot deceive God, you must not deceive yourself. Do not therefore apologize for sins and call them mistakes, for God discerns the secret thoughts and motives of your life; nothing is hid from His all-seeing eye; and if you lie and attempt to cover up your sins, and try to stifle your conscience into believing you are innocent when you are guilty, it will only be the worse for you in the day of retribution.

Dear soul, face the issue. "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Are you clear in your experience today? If not, get right with God. I am aware that in dealing with the delicate matter of an analysis of sins and mistakes, many dishonest souls will attempt to make the term "mistakes" a subterfuge to

cover their sins. They might deceive the writer, they might deceive their nearest friends, and even deceive their own selves, but they will never deceive God, and "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). Thank God for a righteous judge, one who knows the facts in the case, and from whose knowledge nothing can be kept. He shall judge in righteousness, He will properly name sins, and rightly and justly label as mistakes the involuntary trespasses of those who in their integrity have measured up to the light and responsibility that Providence has allotted to them.

No man, as long as he walks in the light, is condemned, but if he refuses light then condemnation is come (John 3:19). "There is no condemnation," says Paul, "to them which are in Christ Jesus." Why no condemnation? Because there is no guilt. Why no guilt? Because there is no known transgression. They are measuring up to their light. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:15). Where there is sin in the proper sense,

there is always condemnation, but mistakes do not produce a sense of guilt, but rather a sense of regret and sorrow. We are not contentious about terms, but we feel it would be more compatible with Scripture, and give us a much clearer conception of the possibilities of grace to speak of voluntary sin as sin, and involuntary trespasses as mistakes, which in reality they are.

"Surely," says the evangelist Chas. G. Finney, "guilt cannot be predicated of the outward act alone, apart from intention, for if the outward act be not according to intention, as in the case of accidents, we never think of imputing guilt, and if it be according to intention, we always when we act rationally, ascribe the guilt to the intention, and not to the mere hand or tongue which became the mind's organ in its wickedness. This is a principle which everybody admits when he understands it. The thing itself is among the intuitive affirmations of every child's mind. No sooner has a child the first idea of right or wrong, than he will excuse himself from blame by saying, 'I did not mean to do it,' and he knows full well that if this

excuse is true, it is valid and good as an excuse; and moreover, he knows that you and everybody else know and must admit it. This pervades the minds of all men and none can intelligently deny it." Is man more sensible than God? If man can recognize the righteousness of the judgment of action according to intention, how much more shall God, who is able to clearly discern the motive and intention that precedes every act committed.

Let us judge the actions of men, therefore, according to the quality of their character, labeling that which is sin as such, and that which is properly mistakes as such, and by thus properly discriminating one from the other we will be better able to locate ourselves, and determine our standing in the realms of grace, and more definitely to lead souls into the proper standard of Christian possibilities.

Someone might possibly object to these statements and say that we could not tell whether one had sinned or merely made a mistake. Exactly. God never made us judges of humanity; on the contrary, He says, "Judge not," but He will safely judge all mankind.

So this objection is practically of no consequence. There is no ironclad rule by which we can always judge the conduct of our fellowmen, for we cannot always know the intention that prompts their conduct. God alone knows this, and we doubt not that much that is condemned here by man will be approved of God in the day of judgment, because He fully understands the motive back of all our actions. While much that we extol will meet with condemnation in the eyes of a God able to discern fully the purpose of every individual; gifts given, work accomplished, sacrifices made, rebukes offered, will all go for naught because they were not the product of righteous motives. That conduct which proceeds from righteous intention is acceptable to God, that which is the product of evil purposes is condemned. All voluntary transgression is *sin,* involuntary transgression is properly an error or mistake. No man can voluntarily transgress God's law and be a Christian. All men do involuntarily transgress, and yet according to Holy Writ "do not sin." 1 John 3:9, (R. V.) Therefore, involuntary transgressions are not properly sins but mistakes.

CHAPTER IV

TEMPTATIONS VS. SINS

We now come to another important issue relative to the sin question, and that is the matter of temptation. It is probably safe to say thousands have lost their way to heaven on account of temptation; not that temptation is sin, but that if we are not able to discriminate the difference it soon leads to discouragement and sin. It is not a mark of the absence of piety to be tempted, in fact the closer we live to God the more likely we are to suffer temptation. Many people look upon temptation as denoting the presence of sin within. This, however, is not necessarily a fact. Others look for the arch tempter, the devil only in the saloon, the brothel, and places of disrepute, but this is also a mistake; always, when we read of Satan in the Scripture, he is among God's people. He went to the place of worship with Job and his brethren, he ascended the pinnacle with Jesus, he is always present to hinder the work of righteousness.

An old man once said to the writer, "The devil never bothers me." We suggested that possibly the reason for this was due to the fact that he already had him. And thus it is, the Christian life is a warfare; temptations must and will be met. *It is no sin to be tempted.* If temptation is a sin, then the Savior was a sinner, for we are told: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points *tempted as we are, yet without sin.*" Heb. 4:15. Here we observe that Jesus was not only tempted, but was without sin, so we conclude that temptation is not sin, for while He was tempted in all points, He did not sin. The apostle further says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Why? "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Exactly. Temptation will work out for our good, but sin never does. God would never say, "Count it all joy when ye fall into sin." It is no dishonor, therefore, nor is it an evidence of a lack of piety to be tempted. Jesus was tempted, and all through the Bible the Christian life is pictured as a conflict. Hear the apostle, "Thou, there-

fore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." "Neither give place to the devil." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." These and many other like statements show that no state of piety exempts from temptation, while in a probationary state, and that no state of piety permits sinning, as is seen by 1 John 3:8, 9. It is therefore safe and logical to assert that *temptation is not sin.*

Webster says that temptation means "to seek, to allure, to test, etc." Thus temptation comes to the soul as allurements, as suggestions, as an enticing influence from the tempter, and never becomes sin until such suggestions or enticements get the consent of our wills to obey them. Temptations might be said to be standing without, knocking for admittance. So long as they are not countenanced, and not permitted to enter, they are temptations only; but if we open the door of our hearts and admit them and cherish them, and love them, and they find a ready response and acceptance on our part, they are no longer temptations, they are now sins. We

cannot prevent the devil from tempting and making suggestions to us, any more than we can prevent ice from freezing or fire from burning, or gravitation from drawing matter to the earth, but we can so order our conduct in life as to prevent ice freezing us, or fire burning us, or gravitation crushing us. So likewise we can order our lives so as to resist temptation, and escape the inevitable consequences of yielding to it. One writer has thus expressed this thought by saying, "We cannot stop the birds from flying over our heads, but we can prevent them from making nests in our hair." The thought is simply that we have no way of preventing the temptation from coming, but we do have power to resist and overcome. And thus when temptation comes, it is not sin; *only when you yield yourself to obey.*

Says Hannah Whitall Smith: "If we fail to recognize the truth about temptation, it will be impossible to prevent our being discouraged. The Bible says: 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.' Temptation, therefore, cannot be sin; and the truth is, it is no more sin to hear these whispers and

suggestions of evil in our souls than it is for us to hear the wicked talk of bad men as we pass along the street. The sin in either case comes only by our stopping and joining in with them. If when wicked suggestions come, we turn from them at once, as we would from wicked talk, and pay no more attention to them than we would to the talk, we do not sin. But if we carry them on in our minds and roll them under our tongues, and dwell on them with a half consent of our will to them as true, then we sin. We may be enticed by temptation a thousand times a day without sin."

So it is, thousands, disheartened and discouraged because they are tempted, are led into darkness by the tempter, and are made to believe they are sinners or they would not have had such thoughts, when really such thoughts right then are repulsive to them, and find no sympathy or accord in their hearts; but Satan is thrusting these temptations upon them, against their own better self. Temptations are the devil's children, whom he is seeking to have you adopt; he brings them to you but, thank God, you need not adopt

them and take them in. No man, when he is tempted, is a sinner; he only becomes a sinner in the degree that he cherishes, harbors and obeys the evil suggestions.

While it is a fact that temptation is not sin in itself, it often proves to be the path which leads into sin; though we can triumph through all our temptations, yet we are often defeated because we wilfully walk into them. Jesus taught us to pray: "Lead us not into temptation," but in spite of this many professing Christians keep company with, and go to places with people when they are conscious beforehand that they are throwing themselves into the lap of temptation. We need not expect the help of God to overcome temptation when we deliberately disregard the injunction of this prayer, and walk with open eyes into the clutches of temptation. It is the purpose of God never to permit us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear, as is seen in 1 Cor. 10:13. But when we deliberately walk into questionable places and put ourselves where we can the more easily be tempted, we need not expect God to verify His promise "to make a way of escape that we may be able

to bear it." When we disregard the scriptural prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," then we forfeit the promise of God "to deliver us from evil." If temptation must come, do not let it be said, reader, that you sought it, but if it seeks you, God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, and will also, with every temptation, make a way of escape.

Let not Satan, therefore, discourage and hinder your progress in the divine life by labeling your temptations sins. They are not such, and never can be, until you have consented to yield obedience to them.

The volitional element only in man's nature can make him responsible for his conduct; and while Satan may entice, persuade and even harass those whom he seeks to defeat and drag back into sin, yet none of his allurements is ever sin until it first meets with your sanction and approval, and gets the consent of your will to put it into practice.

A beautiful and striking illustration of this fact was given in the writer's hearing recently at a campmeeting, by Rev. E. E. Shelhamer, who said in substance, "A lady enters a dry goods store to purchase some dress goods; there

are hundreds of bolts of goods on the shelves. As she enters a clerk comes forward to wait upon her. He proceeds to take down the different qualities at different prices, and after spreading many bolts on the counter, the lady may decide that none of them is what she wants. Very well. Up to this time the looking and pricing of the various kinds of material have cost her nothing; she is under no obligation to the clerk or the firm, for she has not yet decided to take any of them. Her choice in this matter is a personal right and a volitional privilege, and she incurs no responsibility until she has first exercised these privileges. It is the clerk's business to show the goods whether the customer buys or not; she has, therefore, incurred no responsibility, and is out nothing for her venture up to this time. But suppose, after looking over the various qualities of material and comparing the prices one with another, addressing the clerk, she says, 'I'll take so many yards of this.' As soon as the decision is made the clerk cuts the cloth and the customer is under obligation to take the goods, and is thus responsible for her own decision; accordingly she must pay

for the goods. When decision is made then responsibility is assumed."

The application is obvious; the devil may peddle his wares and display his goods all he likes; he may get from the topmost shelves his choicest wares (temptations), but so long as you decide to take none of them they are still his property. Thank God! You have incurred no guilt, you are under no obligation to him, and you have not sinned until these temptations have gained the consent of your will to cherish, accept and indulge in them and to put them into practice. No, temptation is not sin. It is never sin to be tempted, but always sin when we yield.

CHAPTER V

MUST WE SIN?

The preceding pages of this book have been given to a discussion of the origin and nature of sin, sins and mistakes, and temptations and sins. We are now ready, with a proper conception of sin, to investigate the matter of whether or not we must sin. Let the reader keep in mind that we are using the term sin in the actual sense, as defined by John in his first epistle, third chapter, and fourth verse. "Sin is the transgression of the law." Perhaps there is nothing in the realm of Christendom that offers so much contention as the question of whether or not it is possible to live above sin. The majority of professing Christians laugh at the idea of being saved and kept from sin; and thus the standard of Christian living is lowered, until a so-called Christian is nothing more than a sinner who identifies himself with the church. Many openly contend that to be saved from sin is simply out of the question;

that we must sin, more or less, every day, in thought, word and deed. A lady who was a member of an orthodox church, once said to the writer, "I sin every breath I draw;" to which we should have replied that she need not worry about the future; her destiny was already settled; her title to mansions in the skies was assured, for unconditional salvation is provided in the scriptures for infants and idiots. The fact that a person in a land of Bibles and gospel sermons, and opportunities, should know so little about Jesus and His power to save, only advertises the indifference, indolence and possibly ignorance on the part of both pulpit and pew for not looking into this matter; especially the failure of the pulpit to preach Christ as an adequate and all-sufficient Savior. Such ignorance and indifference is doomed to an awful awakening and a more awful reckoning in the day of judgment.

There is nothing that so stirs a backslidden church, a formal pulpit, and the devil himself, as when the death knell of sin is sounded. Shame to the ambassador of Christ,

whether in the pulpit or pew, that would betray his Lord by denying His power to save fully and completely; and would lower the standard of Christian living till there is no distinction to be made between a Christian and a sinner, except that one has his name enrolled on the church register, and the other has not; or that one is a sinner in the church, and the other is a sinner outside.

In this chapter we wish to investigate the possibility of a life victorious over sin, from the standpoint of reason, and will reserve another chapter in which to produce the scriptural conclusions. We say in answer to the question, "Must we sin?" no, absolutely no; and offer as our first proof the nature and constitution of man. We are told that God made man in His own image, and endowed him with certain capacities, among which was the power to choose his own course, his volitional character. It is not too much to say that God has so marvelously endowed him as to lift him above the laws of force. Hence we often say, "God cannot save a sinner who will not be saved." Although it may be said rightly that God reasons with him, God pities him,

God threatens him, God commands him, yet God never compels him. Why? Because this would destroy his volitional nature, and make him by compulsion, obedient to God without any choice in the matter whatever. Wonderful it is, indeed, that God should so constitute man as to put his destiny in his own hands, yet this is exactly what He has done. Of course, if it were only a matter of power, God could do many things which He does not. God could have threaded the country with railroads as well as rivers. He could have caused houses, all furnished, to spring up out of the ground as well as He could have caused trees to grow. He could have caused a nice, well-baked loaf of bread to grow on a wheat straw as well as the grain, that is, if it were merely a matter of power. But does He do these things? Never! Why? Because it is not according to His divine plan. If it were merely a matter of physical power, we doubt not that God could pick up an individual and shake the dirt and the devil out of him, and compel him to live like a saint. He could take that great crowd of Sabbath desecrators, who are forgetting God in their mad anxiety for pleasure, and

spending their Sabbaths in revelry and frolic, and bring them into the house of God to honor and worship Him. But this is not God's plan; for in so doing He would destroy man's volition, as well as His own purpose and plan. It is a fact that men are not made Christians by compulsion, or forced into obedience to Almighty God. It is also a fact that men are not made sinners by compulsion; for this, in like manner would destroy man's volitional nature, and defeat God's purpose and plan. A man is never a Christian, or a sinner either, by compulsion; his volitional endowment, which is fundamentally a part of his nature would necessarily have to be destroyed, and he would have no choice in the matter if compelled to serve God or the devil. To say that we have to sin is to deny and disregard the basic principle of our creation, which is free moral agency, or volition. If we must sin, we are not volitional creatures, and have no choice as to our conduct, but are by compulsion servants of sin. "For to whom ye yield yourselves, servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Rom. 6:16). If we are compelled, therefore, to yield ourselves servants to sin,

and be subject to Satan's power, insomuch that we cannot help but obey him, and really have no choice in the matter, then is our free agency, our volition, destroyed; and to make matters worse, the devil has more power than God. Satan can make us disobey God, but alas, God cannot make us disobey Satan. The devil compels us to be sinners, but God cannot compel us to be righteous. What kind of a doctrine is this?

Is it possible that a good God who hates sin has so created us, that we can resist Him, and cannot resist the devil? The Word says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." There could be no strife unless man possessed power to resist. How unreasonable to think that God as our Creator, should so endow us as to be capable of resisting Him, and yet unable to resist Satan. If this is our dilemma, then He who thus made us is to blame for our predicament, for He has given us all the capacities, we possess, and in thus creating us with power to thwart His purpose and plan, and no power to thwart the purpose and plan of Satan, we are left hopelessly at the mercy of the devil. *Is it a*

fact that He has endowed us with volitional qualities in regard to righteousness, and denied us volitional qualities in regard to sin? In a word, has God made us all helplessly sinners, with no choice in the matter? What nonsense! The facts in the case are that neither God nor the devil can compel us to do either right or wrong, unless our free agency and right of choice be first destroyed. So long as we possess these fundamental and basic qualities in our nature, which are primarily God-given to every person, we have it absolutely in our own power to do right or wrong, to sin or not to sin, according as *we will.* The will is the pivot upon which all volitional action moves. I will to walk, and I walk; I will to talk, and I talk; I can be a Christian if I will, or I can be a sinner if I will; I can go to heaven if I will, or I can go to hell if I will. Our wills thus enable us to execute our choice. Hence, the scriptural injunction, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Both the choice and the will are here urged into action. But why urge a choice, if in reality we are servants of sin, and have no choice, but to do its bidding? "How long

halt ye between two opinions?" says the prophet. "If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, follow him." This is strange language indeed, to address to creatures who really had no choice in the matter, and could do nothing other than to follow Baal.

Says an able writer on this subject, "God is physically omnipotent, and yet His moral influences exerted by the Spirit may be resisted. You will readily see that if the Spirit moved men by physical omnipotence, no mortal could possibly resist His influence. But now we know it to be a fact that man can resist the Holy Ghost, for the nature of moral agency implies this and the Bible asserts it. Hence, if our action is that of moral agents, our moral freedom to do or not do must remain. It cannot be set aside or in any way overruled. If God should in any way set aside our voluntary agency He would of necessity terminate at once our moral and responsible action. Force and moral agency are terms of opposite meaning. They are not co-existent."

It would be useless to assume that man had any responsibility, unless he was capable

of controlling his own actions. If God should make men obey Him by force, obedience would cease to merit reward; likewise if the devil has it in his power to force men to obey him and disobey God, this disobedience could not rightly be punished, seeing the man is not responsible for his own conduct, but was made disobedient by compulsion. Can Satan compel men to serve him against their will? No. As men must serve God by choice, so they must likewise serve Satan for the same reason. All who are sinners are so by choice; no man sins unless he first desires to do so, and no man is ever *compelled to sin.* Any man can sin, any man may sin, but no man *must* sin.

We cannot conceive of God as an intelligent, allwise and infinite Creator, issuing a code of laws to be obeyed by His creatures, when He knew they had neither the purpose, power nor possibility of obeying them; but were compelled, of necessity, to disregard and disobey them every day, in thought, word and deed. Most assuredly, when God issued His commandements concerning the conduct of His creatures, in His own infinite wisdom He

knew they were capable of conforming to every requirement, as well as being able to disobey and disregard them all. If sin, or virtue either, were otherwise than volitional it would cease to deserve punishment or merit reward.

We are not machines to be manipulated at the pleasure of another. No sensible man can charge God with his sin and folly, nor can he shift the responsibility for his unholy deeds entirely upon the devil, for it is not in his power to make us sin against our wills any more than it is possible for God to make us righteous against our wills. Satan may entice us, tempt us, persecute us; but he can never compel us to sin; in fact, we are told, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." And God further says, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

The right of choice and volitional character may be illustrated by the following experience of the writer: While making a tour

of Florida, we chanced to be one day on our way over to the old Suwanee river. We crossed another small river whose waters were crystal clear. We could see the bottom of the stream all the way across; also the fish as they moved lazily about from place to pace. We attempted to catch these fish with a hook and line. Being able to see where they were, we had no trouble, after baiting the hook, in dropping it down right among them; but to our disappointment, after playing the bait before them, and following them from place to place for some time, we finally gave up the task in disgust, thoroughly convinced that all further effort was useless. Thus it is with mankind; Satan may and does tempt everybody, but while he may play the bait before us, he cannot compel us to swallow the hook. He never catches or conquers a soul until it first of its own volition, yields to the temptar's snare. No soul is defeated, no spiritual fort ever surrenders, sin and Satan are never victorious until we first *willfully yield* ourselves servants to sin.

"How can two walk together," asks the prophet, "except they be agreed?" What

two? God and you. How agreed? In moral character. God says in His book, "Be ye holy." Why? "For I am holy." Bear in mind, reader, if you walk with God, you must walk where God walks. God has no intention, whatever, of leaving His path of holiness, to come down and walk with you in sin. He will not surrender His character to be in harmony with you, but if you would walk with Him, you must make your life correspond with His Divine requirements. Hence, he says, "Like as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living." (R. V.) Why? So that God and you may be agreed and walk together in harmony. God never walks with sinners, that is, so as to be in harmony and sweet fellowship with them, for *He is angry with the wicked every day*. To say that we must sin, therefore, means either that God is reconciled to us in our sins, or else He is never reconciled to us at all. Is it possible that an infinite, intelligent God has issued a code of laws and governmental principles that His creatures cannot possibly observe and obey? If so, then we who disregard and disobey them are not re-

sponsible; but God Himself is directly responsible for all our failures and sins, in that He has put the standard so high as to be utterly impossible for us to reach it. He has issued laws that we cannot keep. What nonsense! The very fact that sin brings condemnation proves conclusively that it is volitional and could have been avoided. No one is ever under condemnation for failing to do the impossible; only that which is within the realm of possibility can produce condemnation. Hence, every sinner is under condemnation, because sin is volitional and not compulsory.

"But," says the objector, "all that you say concerning the will and volition is true, yet while it is a fact that when we are converted our wills are brought into subjection to God's divine will, we must not overlook the fact that we are not yet glorified, and are still living in these old sinful bodies, and that while we are in the body, we just must sin." Well, let us see. We have always thought that the body was subject to the soul, and not the soul to the body. But let us investigate the matter without prejudice. If the body does the sinning after we are converted what did

it before? Was it the body then? If so, we need no redemption for the soul at all, but rather body redemption, for the soul is not the sinner, but the body; in which case the soul need not be converted, need not repent, needs not the blood of Christ, for Christ died for sinners; hence, the conclusion of the whole matter is simply that Christ died for bodies and not for souls. But how does this compare with the "Thus saith the Lord?" "The *soul* that sinneth, it shall die." "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own *soul?*" and many others. Such a doctrine is bordering on sacrilege, for it is equivalent to saying our Savior was a sinner. In fact if sin is in the body, then Jesus was a sinner, for he had a body like ours.

In one of Mr. Finney's books, he has the following to say in regard to sin being in the body: "Sin is not only the violation of moral law, but the voluntary violation of moral law. This implies that the sinning subject must

know the law, and that its violations must be a matter of choice—otherwise the subject incurs no guilt, and is not liable to the infliction of penalty. If the subject who sins must know the law, its violation must be voluntary, or it does not incur the guilt of sin—the subject must be intelligent and intelligence belongs not to matter, or body, but belongs to spirit. Now the body not being a party to the relations out of which moral law arises, and not being intelligent, cannot of itself be under the authority of moral law, and cannot sin."

Sin is never located in matter; sin is strictly a malady of the soul, although the body has suffered the consequences of a sinful soul within. If sin were a body malady, an expert surgeon might locate and remove it; if sin is in the body, then to lose an arm or a limb, or any portion of the body would simply mean that our sinfulness had been decreased accordingly. A catastrophe in which we lose a part of our body, in this case, should be looked upon as a providential blessing from the hand of the Almighty, for it has reduced our sinfulness. If our measure of sin be according to avoirdupois, then a small man is slightly a sinner,

while a two hundred pounder would be as mean as the devil. We have often heard the expression, "Nobody loves a fat man." Perhaps this is the solution to the mystery. If sin is in the body, what we want is not soul cleansing but body reduction; not the blood of Christ, but a good dose of anti-fat. According to this hypothesis, a one-armed, one-legged, toothless, bald-headed man has almost reached Christian perfection. This is ridiculous, but it illustrates the folly of some who would contend that the old body must sin.

We once asked a physician, a university graduate, a man familiar with all the parts of human anatomy, if he had ever discovered sin anywhere in any part of the body. It is needless to say that he had never been able to locate sin anywhere in any part of the body. The reason is obvious: it is not there.

We are told by the Apostle Paul, "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body" (1 Cor. 6:18). Exactly. The body can never sin unless made to do so by the soul which dwells within. The body is merely the house in which the soul lives. You might as well talk about the suit of clothes a man wears

committing sin, as the body. The body is only the temple of clay in which the soul-man dwells. You might as well arrest the house in which the thief lives for the thief's conduct, as to blame the body for the conduct of the soul. The body is merely the tool, or organ, which the soul uses to carry out its purposes. When the soul-man moves out (which is the controlling power of the body), the body is no longer capable of action. Did you ever hear a corpse swear? Did you ever know a dead man to steal? Certainly not. Why? Because the man, the swearer, the dishonest soul, has left the helpless temple of clay behind; it, of itself, is unable to act in any capacity; he who dwelt within and controlled, and was responsible for its actions, has departed. When filthy habits, habits of intemperance, habits of uncleanness, are manifest through the instrumentality of the body, it is only an announcement of the fact that an unclean individual resides within. A house is never any cleaner than its tenants. If you go into a man's house and find it filthy and unclean you certainly do not blame the house, but rather the parties who live there. They are responsible for its

unkempt and filthy condition. I see an old man going down the street, his mouth and beard all stained with tobacco spittle, his face dirty, his finger nails uncared for, his hair uncombed; or worse yet, a young man, a dirty, ill-smelling cigarette in his mouth, blowing his second-hand smoke from between his rotten teeth and out of his dirty nose into the faces of all that are within his proximity. Do I blame the body? No; in my heart I pity the poor body, so poisoned and degraded and made a helpless tool of the depraved appetites of the unclean sinner who is living on the inside.

But if sin were in the flesh, (that is, the body) the Book expressly says Christ came to condemn sin in the flesh; not that sin, however, is literally in, or a part of the body, but rather that he came to condemn sin that dwells in the soul, as it is dwelling in the body. Furthermore, flesh, in the scripture, does not always essentially mean the physical body as is seen by Paul's statement to the Romans, "For ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit" (Rom. 8:9). Here the apostle did not mean to say they were not in their bodies (because they

were) but uses the term flesh here to denote the natural, or rather the absence of the spiritual. "What," says Paul, "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" If the body is His temple he surely ought to have control of His own house, and not suffer it to be ruled by another contrary to His desires. It is true that the body has suffered and does suffer as a result of sin, and that redemption and restoration are provided for it in God's great plan. But the body is not volitional, nor responsible; it is subject to the powers of the soul. But thanks be unto God, He has given us, in His Son Jesus Christ, a redemption that is adequate to the needs of both body and soul.

Says M. W. Knapp in his little tract entitled, "Sin in the Flesh," "We are expressly commanded to glorify God in our bodies which are His (1 Cor. 6:20). Does it glorify God for His temple to be turned into a filthy tobacco smoke-house or a squirt-gun, or whiskey barrel, or wine cask, or beer keg? Does it glorify Him for it to be polluted with unclean lusts and secret sins? Does it glorify Him to be seen at the dance, the card table,

the theatre, the race course, the circus? If the Spirit of Jesus is in the heart, His life will control the body and overflow in the glad use of all its powers, leaving no room for Satan's damning doctrine of sin in the flesh. Woe unto all who seek to substitute sin in the flesh for Jesus manifest there!"

Paul plainly recognizes the difference in dealing with sin as a soul malady, and in dealing with the infirmities of the human body. Concerning the body and its infirmities, he says, "I keep under my body and bring it unto subjection." But he never refers to sin in any such manner. He never says, "I keep under sin, or bring it into subjection." Why? Because this is not God's plan in dealing with sin. Our human nature is brought into subjection to the will of God, but the carnal mind is enmity against God. Hence, the only provision for it is its complete extermination, eradication (1 John 1:7), its crucifixion (Rom. 6:6).

It is inexcusable ignorance for one to teach, as some do in these days, that no one can live without committing sin every day, or worse yet, that we must sin to keep humble. No

wonder that saving souls is thrice as difficult as damning them. Many pulpits are teaching that we cannot be saved from our sins, but must sin a little every day. If the object of the church is to provide a hospital for invalids or a covering for scoundrels, then this doctrine is a success and consistent; but if the object of the church is to glorify God, and its mission is to save men, then the teaching that we must sin is a false doctrine, a lie, and ought to be banished back to the hell from whence it came. No man, who is called of God, and has the anointing of the Holy One upon him, will ever preach a sinning religion. The man who preaches a sinning religion has either never been called to the ministry or else is backslidden from his calling and is a traitor to his trust.

If I were a sinner, unsaved, unconverted, and a preacher should ask me to accept Christ as my Savior, and then tell me that no one could live without sin (that is to say, the Christ he is asking me to receive, and who died to save sinners, is unable to save us from sinning), I must declare it would be foolish for me to accept Him for a purpose for which He is

inadequate. I would repudiate Him as a failure if He came to save me from my sins, and then was unable to do so. Thousands are rejecting Him today because He is not held up to them as an efficient and sufficient Savior; and be it said to the shame of those who are posing as His ambassadors, that the blame for this is due to the powerless, compromising, inadequate type of Christianity which disgraces rather than exalts Him as a Savior from sin. The very first promise in the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ is, "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people *from* their sins." If He cannot save us from our sins, He is a failure, His death is in vain, His mission defeated. I, for one, prefer to be a sinner, if I *must* sin, without a religious profession, and thus avoid adding the sin of hypocrisy to my other sins.

The devil has no better representatives in this world than those who advocate a sinning religion; ministers of Satan are they, who pose as the ministers of righteousness, but whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor. 11:14, 15). It is mysterious, indeed,

why anyone should contend that sin is a necessary element in making us humble.

"We notice in a reputable religious paper of one of the leading denominations," says the Editor of the *Herald of Holiness,* "the following sentence: 'It never occurred to Paul to profess complete sanctification.' Also, 'the holiest and saintliest are most conscious of their sins and shortcomings before God.' We would like to know what kind of friendly offices sins and shortcomings perform in getting people closer to God. Where in the Bible are we told that sins and shortcomings are saviors to help us closer to God? We have always been taught that sin seperated us from God, in the first instance of its history, and that its tragic record had been always divisive, and trended us away from God, and brought us under condemnation, instead of bringing us closer to God. By what sort of jugglery of words and legerdemain of thought does our brother manage to contradict the whole trend of Bible teaching, and the whole nature and design and philosophy of the atonement, and makes sin a helper in bringing men into the holiest and saintliest relations to God?"

We would further comment on the brother's statements, if it is a fact that sin is an essential quality in making us humble, it is only logical to say that a little sin would make us a little humble, but more sin would make us more humble, so the devil would be the most humble of us all. Such nonsense! Surely such preaching and such articles are not well weighed; they are not the product of earnest, careful and prayerful consideration. It seems to us that if one never had read more of the Bible than the first chapter of the New Testament, he could see the object of Christ's mission to the world: "He shall save his people *from* their sins" (Matt. 1:12), not save them *in* them, or *with* them, or *in spite of* them, but *from them.* Strange it is, indeed, that men will read this promise and a multitude of other promises, equally as clear, close the book, and contend earnestly that we cannot be saved from our sins; and moreover they will be insulted if you class them with infidels, yet that is exactly what they are—unbelievers sailing under the colors of Christianity, for they deny the purpose and power of the gospel to save people from their sins.

It is not unfair to say that a man who advocates the idea that we cannot be saved from all sin in this life puts himself under suspicion, and is unworthy of the confidence of his neighbors. Why? Because if it is true that God cannot save him from all sin, how do we know from which sin it is that God cannot save him? It might be dishonesty; if so, we cannot afford to trust him far; or it might be lust; if so, we do not care to be in company with libertines; or it might be lying; if so you can put no confidence in his word, and thus he covers himself with suspicion by his infidelity. Surely this is not the picture of a New Testament Christian!

For the sake of the argument let us say that God can save us from our grosser sins, but not the lesser. Let us see. If a man yields to a slight temptation to commit what he calls a little sin, it cannot be a regard for God that keeps him from yielding to greater temptation and committing greater sins; for the same regard and reverence that kept him from great sins, would also keep him from small ones. The right regard and reverence for God will keep a man from all sin; he will be as careful

not to desecrate God's holy day, or to take His name in vain, as he is not to steal or commit adultery. Why? Because the same God who has said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," has also said, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8; the same God who has said, "Thou shalt not steal," has also said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). Love for God, and proper reverence for His will, will cause you to respect and obey one commandment as well as another. If you do not love God enough to abstain from small sins, you do not love Him well enough to abstain from greater ones. True, you may not indulge in grosser sins, but it is not your love and reverence for God that prevents it. Very likely you abstain from them for various other reasons, such as self-respect, fear of punishment, and so on.

Be that as it may, the unrepented sin, whether great or small, is the unforgiven sin; and the unforgiven sin must meet its inevitable consequences. Hence, James says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend

in one point is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). Not that in offending in one point, he has actually committed all the sins in the decalogue, but that in offending at all he has missed the mark of obedience, and upon obedience to God hinges our justification. You need not break every commandment to make you a sinner; to indulge in one known and wilful sin is enough to forfeit your justification and reconciliation to God.

For illustration: I am crossing a large meadow, surrounded by a long fence, containing two hundred panels. When about half way across I am pursued by an old ram. I make for the fence at top speed, with the pursuer close behind. When I reach the fence, it is needless to tell the reader that I do not have to jump all the two hundred panels to put me out of the meadow. Thankful am I, indeed, that to clear one panel is all that is necessary to elude my pursuer, and put me out of the path of danger. The application is obvious; a man need not commit all the sins revealed in the Bible to make him a sinner. One known and unforgiven sin will break his fellowship with God.

As we often say, a chain is never any stronger than its weakest link. Why so? Because one link broken is sufficient to prevent its fulfilling its purpose. A fierce bull dog is chained to his kennel, when along comes Mr. Thomas Cat. Does the dog have to break every link in the chain to get loose? Certainly not. One link broken is sufficient to make the fur fly. Dear reader, do not think you must be a great sinner to be damned. It may be that there are those in hell now whose sins are less than yours. One voluntary, known and wilful transgression, unrepented of, and unforgiven, will prove enough to settle your destiny. The gravity of one sin is seen in that it has produced death on the entire race (Rom. 5:12).

But what is a sinner? We call a man who sings a singer. Why? Because he sings. We call a man who preaches a preacher. Why? Because he preaches. We call a man who paints a painter. Why? Because he paints. We call a person who sins a sinner. Why? Because he sins. But suppose he is a Methodist? Then he is simply a Methodist sinner; or if a Baptist, only a Baptist sinner; and let it be

known to the reader here and now that church sinners are not exempted from the inevitable consequences, but share a like fate with common sinners, in that for all alike, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Our identification and classification are established by John in his first epistle, in which the line of demarkation is definitely drawn, "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3:8). "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3:9). "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (1 John 3:10). In what? In that one crowd sins and the other does not. There are many people who seem to think that because they were once converted, and are now members of the church, in good standing, their sins are overlooked and not counted against them; or, in other words, church membership and a religious profession exonerate them from further responsibility.

Well, if a converted man can sin and retain the divine favor, then may not an unconverted man do the same? If not, God is making an unjust distinction, which is contrary to the Word of God (Col. 3:25). One of two things

is certain, either God can or He cannot save us from our sins. If He can, then no man can be reconciled to Him until he is thus saved. If He cannot, then we can never be reconciled to Him at all, unless we are reconciled while we are yet in our sins. If this is true, then the whole thing culminates in the fact that the only difference between a sinner and a Christian is that the converted man is a Christian sinner, and the other just a common transgressor. What a travesty on the purpose and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If God cannot save us from all sin, then He has not all power, but if He can and will not, then He tolerates sin in us as a matter of His own choice; and He, instead of we, is responsible for our sins, in that He only can save us and yet refuses to do so.

It is remarkable to see to what extremes people will go in order to avoid the issue, and actually be saved from their sins. One crowd intimates that a Christian *cannot sin,* the other that he *cannot keep from sinning.* Both of these views are far-fetched, unreasonable, and unscriptural. The first class, who would advocate the impossibility of sin, base their ar-

gument on 1 John 3:9, "cannot sin because he is born of God." But it is not compatible with common sense, experience, or revelation, to make this an infallible "cannot;" we know that anyone can sin, if he so desires. The "cannot" in the text is a moral cannot rather than an infallible cannot, and implies that you cannot sin and be born of God, because sin breaks your fellowship with God, and forfeits your divine adoption. You can no more sin and be a Christian than you can steal and be honest, drink and be sober, or lie and be truthful. A large majority of people, however, take the other side of the sin question, and insist that *we must sin,* and thus repudiate both the purpose and power of Christ's mission, which is to "save his people from their sins." We admit that we are not surprised after all, that saving souls seems to be a difficult task. How can it be otherwise? Many of our pulpits have nothing better to offer than a sinning religion; thus, not only misleading the people by teaching the impossibility of a victorious life, but actually sowing the seeds of infidelity and skepticism from the very pulpit that ought to honor and exalt the Christ as a Savior from

all sin. No wonder that many people do not want Christ in their lives, when He is represented to them as a failure, coming to save His people from their sins, yet unable to do so.

Surely they are not to be blamed for not wanting our religion, which appears to do nothing for us but give us a name to live without the power to do so. Thank God! He who has called us has also power to redeem us. "He is able to save to the *uttermost*" (Heb. 7:25).

CHAPTER VI

WHAT SAITH THE LORD?

Many people never read their Bibles; others are only casual readers; and comparatively few are really students of the Word of Life. From the hasty reader many beautiful truths are hidden, while the possibilities of God's grace are undiscovered. Many readers of the Bible remind us of a lady we once met who said she could not see sanctification in the Bible. We asked her if she had ever looked for it. She replied, "Well, I don't know as I have." Of course we are not apt to find anything in or out of the Bible that we are not looking for, especially is this true when we do not want to find it. Thus those who contend that we are all sinners, and that none of us can live without sin, are usually those who have not well weighed the matter, and thoroughly investigated the possibilities of grace. What an awakening is coming to the indifferent, indolent, gormandizing, pleasure-seeking, fun-loving,

money-grasping, thoughtless multitude who are concerned only for the things of time, instead of those of eternity; and who are interested more in their bodies than their souls. They seem to regard neither God nor man, and care not for the joys of heaven, nor fear the horrors of hell.

It is not the object of the writer to teach, on these pages that we *cannot sin;* for there is no man *impeccable* and all *may* sin; but we do intend to prove conclusively from the Word of God that we *must not* sin if we hope to retain the favor of Almighty God. As long as we are in a state of probation we are susceptible to temptation, and as long as we are susceptible to temptation we *may* sin. Every fair-minded person ought to distinguish the difference between being able not to sin, and not being able to sin; one implies that you can sin, but are able by God's grace and help, to refrain from yielding. The other implies that you could not sin even if you so desired. If the Bible reveals anything at all it most assuredly reveals the fact that God hates sin; and as clearly reveals the fact that the devil hates righteousness. Now the reader can take

his choice—be a Christian, God's child, and hate sin, or be a sinner, a child of the devil, and cleave to sin.

But to the question, "Must we sin?" The preceding chapter has dealt with the question from the standpoint of our volitional characters. We will now discuss the matter from the standpoint of the one source of authority in all moral and spiritual problems. Hence, the caption of this chapter, "What saith the Lord?" The popular idea that we get religion to stop sin is misleading; for, in fact, we stop sin to gain divine favor. The prophet Isaiah says, in laying down the initial requirements of pardon, "Let the wicked *forsake his way,* and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). God's favor never comes upon a man in sin; He is never pleased with a sinner; to say that He is, means that He is pleased with sin. No one need to expect pardon while in a state of conscious disobedience. In fact, no one is ever saved without prayer. "Ask and it shall be given," is the scriptural injunction. Yet the Psalmist

plainly declares, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The person who is conscious of disobedience in his life is not in a position to prevail with God in effectual prayer. Says James, the apostle, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a *righteous* man availeth much." Of whom? A *righteous man.* Not a man who is a failure at every turn in the road, and who brags about the fact that he does not claim to live above sin, and so on, but a *righteous* man; a man who does that which is right, and has no regard for iniquity in his heart.

But the old prophet further says, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear you" (Isa. 59:1, 2). No *sinner,* whether in the church or out, need expect answered prayer, either for his own, or another's salvation, for God will not hear him, unless he first repents and forsakes his sins. Why does God refuse to hear him? Because his sins have

come between him and his God, and he tolerates sin in his heart.

God does not hear the prayer of the church member who advocates and practices sin, any more than He hears the saloon-keeper's prayer. Dear reader, if you expect to cherish the hope of eternal life, and expect to bask in His divine favor, you must not sin. Stop it now, for God regards not the prayer of those who insist on continuing in sin.

The faithless prayer is the useless prayer. Sin is the great destroyer of our confidence in the promises of God; it mars our faith, and makes our prayers ineffectual. Says John, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, *because we keep* his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:21, 22). When do we have confidence toward God? When we love Him, and sin every day in thought, word and deed? No! No!! When we love Him and keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. If a man says he loves God and keeps not His commandments he is a liar and the

truth is not in him (See 1 John 2:4, 5). Likewise in the book of Job it is said, "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot" (Job 11:13-15). When? When thou hast put iniquity away from thee, and will no longer permit wickedness to dwell in thy tabernacles.

Do not flatter yourself, reader, that you are a Christian while living in any degree of sin. God never pardons a sinner until he first forsakes his sins. Let us illustrate: A man is convicted of larceny and brought before the judge; his attorneys admit his guilt, but put in a plea for mercy and pardon, on the ground that their client was driven to the crime by distressing need. They plead eloquently before the court, and remind his honor that the character of the defendant, up to this time, has always been above reproach. They bring influence to bear upon the judge, and use every possible means in order to procure the pardon. The court is convinced of all they say, but the pardon hinges yet upon one point: will the de-

fendant refrain from a repetition of such conduct? Before the pardon can be granted the court must be assured that from this time henceforth the defendant will be an honorable, upright, and law-abiding citizen. If the court is given to understand that the defendant will try, in his poor, weak way, to do right, but expects to break the laws of the commonwealth every day, in thought, word and deed, it is needless to say, in fact you may rest assured that there will be no pardon forthcoming. Likewise, when the sinner approaches God for pardon, the first demand made upon him is to forsake his way; no longer to regard iniquity in his heart, and to put it from him. His moral standing, his blue blood aristocracy, his financial ability, all amount to nothing in gaining God's favor; the thing that counts with Him is, "Are you ready to break with sin?"

If God has provided for salvation from sin in His plan, then He has provided for its continuance. How does that sound? How would it do for us to preach that God has made arrangements for us to go on in sin and be defiled by it; in other words to preach that He sanctions sin in certain cases, especially in

those who are called by His name, and live in this world to represent Him. Must his representatives have sin in them? To be sure, sin is the work of the devil, but has God made provision in the atonement for those who represent Him to be defiled by it? There are some people who seem to think that God has employed sin as a kind of means of grace to make us humble. But God never uses sin to work any grace in us. In other words, God has never asked the assistance of Satan in the work of redemption.

Let us hear John, the apostle, on this matter: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Is this statement true or false? If it is false, and those born of God do commit sin, then undoubtedly one sinner has as much right as another to say he is born of God; but if it is true, no person who commits sin can be born of God. The discriminating element, therefore, between a child of God and a child of the devil as we have already shown, is in the fact that one sins and the other does not. Now, if you just cannot keep from sinning, then take your stand with the devil, your father, for "Ye are of your father, the devil." We

are not in sympathy with the doctrine of modern times which emphasizes the common fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. We repudiate it as being unscriptural. God is no more the sinner's father than the President of the United States is the writer's father. We plainly see they are of their father, the devil, as we have just quoted above, true, God is the *creator* of all man-kind, but the father only of those who are born of His Spirit, and made partakers of His divine nature; and when we are the recipients of His transforming power, we no longer commit sin. "In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil" (1 John 3:10). In what? In that one sins and the other does not.

Could the race have been saved, or could God have been reconciled in any degree to sin in His people, it is not likely He would have provided a redemption at such an infinite cost. But because sin is of the devil and produces death wherever it exists, and ultimately means the damnation of its slaves, therefore, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might *destroy* the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). What did

you say was the purpose of His manifestation? "That he might destroy the works of the devil." Reader, have you been in the habit of reading this scripture, suppress, or contend with instead of *destroy?* Thank God, it is destroy; and He is amply able to fulfill the purpose of His manifestation.

Webster says destroy means, "To put an end to." Exactly; that is the object of the mission of Jesus Christ, to put an end to sin in our lives, and enable us to live triumphantly, through Him who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. If, after coming to earth, bleeding, dying, and rising again, He is unable to accomplish the object of His mission, then the purpose of God is defeated and our case is hopeless. Let us not thus deny our Lord and His power to save; and let us further see to it that all which He came to do for us is accomplished in our souls, and that we have a victorious testimony concerning our every-day life.

But again, we read in the Word of God (Rom. 6:11), "Likewise reckon yé yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." If we are right in our conception of the nature of God, and

have any idea at all as to His desires concerning His creatures, we are fully persuaded that God does not love a hypocrite, that He does not want us to profess falsely, and that He does not want us to pretend to be that which we are not, yet here He says, "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." Does He want us to reckon a lie? Most assuredly not! He wants us to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin, for one reason alone, and that is, because we are dead unto sin and may be alive unto God. But the apostle continues, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies." When do we possess mortal bodies? In this present life only, this side of the resurrection. This being true, we need not sin here, for the injunction is that sin shall not reign over us while in our mortal bodies. Thank God for a possible, present, and victorious experience of Christian piety.

But the apostle further emphasizes a possible deliverance from sin by declaring, "For sin shall not have dominion over you." Where is the bogus preacher, that blind leader of the blind, that minister of Satan, posing as a minister of righteousness, that can fly into the face

of such plain statements, and, contradicting them all, with many others, preach a Christ who has the purpose but not the power to deliver, and who declares that we must sin? Where is that pillar in the church that raised such a disturbance and got so mad when he was told he could be saved and kept from his sins? Many people seem to be especially afraid that they will get grace and cannot sin. No danger of that. You can never reach a place in probation where you *cannot* sin, but you will, and must reach the place in grace where you *need not, and do not* sin. If there was a place however, in grace where we could not sin, the writer would certainly be a candidate for this experience. But, alas, there is no such state while on probation.

If the average person were as fearful of not being good enough, as he is of being too good, the world would be better, the standard of piety better, the church held in more respect, and God glorified where He is now dishonored. Every Christian's business should be to glorify God. How? By sinning every day in thought, word and deed? No, a thou-

sand times, no; but by righteous and consistent Christian living.

The apostle to the church at Corinth says: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his" (1 Cor. 6:20). Or, as Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men that others may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). See what? Your daily sinning and repenting? No indeed, your good works. Do we glorify God by sinning a little every day? Never. If we obey these, and hundreds of other Scriptures, *we must not sin.* For God is never glorified in or by sin. To sin is to dishonor and grieve Him.

"My little children, these things I write unto you that ye sin not." This scripture plainly teaches us that it is God's purpose, that we should not sin; yet the context, "and if any man sin," simply shows that no man is impeccable, and that all *might* sin, in which case we have an advocate with the Father. Who is it? The priest? No! The Virgin Mary? No! The preacher? No! Jesus Christ, the righteous; He is the one mediator

between God and man. The fact, however, that we have an intercessor and advocate, in nowise implies that we must sin, any more than having an insurance policy on my property implies that I must burn it down. Both alike are simply provisions made in case of misfortune.

Scriptures almost without number can be given which show conclusively that it is God's purpose and plan that we be saved here and now from our sins. Titus 2:11, 14; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 John 1:7; Gal. 1:4; John 8:34-36; John 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; 1 Cor. 10:13; Jude 24, 25, and many others equally as clear. Is it a fact that all these high sounding promises are false and misleading, and do not mean what they say? Is it a fact that after all the Bible condemns sin, we are still hopeless slaves to it? Is it a fact that after God's Son has died to save us from our sins we are yet hopelessly in bondage to them? Is this all the plan of salvation can do? Were the life, the miracles, the sublime examples, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ all given to provide a salvation that is inadequate to our need? How absurd to think of charging God with

such folly as to issue a code of laws and governmental principles that His people can never keep! Do not thus dishonor God with your ignorance and infidelity concerning His promises; for not to know them is ignorance and not to believe them is infidelity.

Let us notice these scriptures briefly and pass on. It seems to the writer that comment could not make them any clearer. In Titus 2:11, 14, we have a statement both of the purpose and the power of Christ's mission into the world, "That we should live soberly, righteously and godly *in this present world,*" because He gave Himself "that he might *redeem us from all iniquity.*" Has His great sacrifice been made in vain, and are we unable to live righteously and godly in this present world? Or, is it possible that we are measuring up to this standard when we are sinning every day? Can Christ redeem us from all iniquity, or is this all a mistake, a mistranslation, or the product of an imaginary mind? No. Thank God, He is sufficiently able to perform the work in every human soul, and to redeem us fully here and now.

Reader, Stop! Look! Listen! Are you professing to be a disciple of Christ, and at the same time repudiating the statements of His book and denying the possibilities of His grace? Do you belong to that multitude, that "having a form of godliness deny the power thereof"? This condition, says the apostle, is characteristic of the last days; great churches, great choirs, great preachers, great show, no power. If the truth of this statement is doubted it can easily be proven by going into the average large and fashionable church and attempting to testify to the power and possibility of Christ to save His people from all sin here and now. A few testimonies of this kind soon become offensive, and it is likely if repeated a few times, the testifier will be waited upon by a committee, and asked to refrain from such statements. What is the matter? Nothing, only they are unbelievers, denying the power of God, but having a form of godliness. Be it said to our shame, that in only a few places is Jesus held up as an efficient and present Savior. Why should a man be looked upon by those who claim to be Christians, as a crank or fanatic, simply because he dares to believe

God's Word and in His power to save. A certain people today are laying great stress on the statement, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" and yet they, of all the people, ought to have the least to say about believing, for *they deny His power to deliver from sin in this present world.* This brands them not as believers but as unbelievers and we might add, baptized unbelievers. The statement when put into practice is true; but no man is a believer who denies the power and repudiates the possibility of his Savior being able to save him from his sins. Belief in a historical Christ cannot save. We must know Him as an efficient and present deliverer from our sins. We must know Him not only historically, or doctrinally, but experimentally and practically.

Second Timothy 2:19 is another very clear statement as to what the Christian's relation to sin should be. "Let him," says the apostle, *"depart from iniquity."* Does the reader really desire to follow Jesus and be a New Testament Christian? Then remember that "Christ suffered, leaving us an example, *that we should follow in his steps who did no sin"* (1 Pet. 2:21, 22). No man can be made, by

any perversion of language, to be a follower of Jesus, who sins every day. Such a statement not only shows gross ignorance, but is irreverent and unbelieving to the core. Says a prominent writer, "Christ died to meet the demands of a holy law that had been broken by sinners, but never fulfilled it in such a sense as to allow the redeemed, His followers, to violate it. He would have been a poor Savior, a fearful leader indeed, and His people wretched followers, if they construed His obedient life into a liberty granted them to transgress that which He so gloriously honored. His plan was not to fill the world with commandment-breaking Antinomians, but law-keeping Christians." Take the name, Savior. If Christ is called any one name more than another it is Savior. He is called over and over the Savior of the world. No one can question that this is His God-given name. Now, what is the common-sense view of a savior? He is one who saves. He is not one who merely offers to save, but he must of necessity, from the very nature of the name, be one who actually does save. The only claim to the name lies in the fact behind the name.

We might as well call a man a king who had offered to reign, as to call a man a savior who has only offered to save. When we say Christ is our Savior, what are we thinking of Him? Do we think of Him as one who is actually saving us now? Or do we think of Him as one who only offers to save us at some future time."

Obedience is indispensable if we anticipate the reward and blessing promised in the scripture. If I yield myself into the care of a physician, and trust him to cure me, I must of course obey his orders. If I am traveling through a strange country and employ a guide, I must go as he directs. No physician, no matter how skillful he may be, can cure me if I disregard his instructions and do not obey his orders. If we expect the Lord to protect us and help us in time of need, we must first be obedient to His orders, and walk as He directs.

The next two scriptures, 1 John 1:7 and Heb. 7:25, form a close analogy, and simply bring to the mind of the reader the efficiency and sufficiency of our Savior. *"His blood cleanseth us from all sin."* Is this true? Thank God, it is. "He is able to save to the utter-

most." How much? To the uttermost. The word here translated uttermost is *panteles,* and has a compound significance, that is of being *complete and continual,* and simply means, He is able to *save and to keep saved.*

There are many scriptures which we would like to present in this chapter, so that it will be necessary for us to shorten our comments on this, and pass on to the next. In Gal. 1:4, we are again reminded of the mission of Christ, "That he might deliver us from this present evil world." Can He do so? If not, then again we must bow our heads in shame and humiliation, and acknowledge to the world that the Christ whom we love and serve is a failure.

It has, undoubtedly, always been the purpose and plan of the Almighty to deliver us from the bondage of sin, as will be seen from the apostle's statement in Eph. 1:4. Here you will observe, "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and without blame before him* in love." Here it is conceived in the great infinite mind of God, even before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and

without blame. Notice, we are to be without blame before God, not man; man is often a hard, incompetent, unkind judge. We can never fully please men; Christ Himself was unable to do so, and even with His pure, spotless, sinless, blameless life, they said, "He hath a devil." "We know this man, he is a sinner," and so on. *We can please God,* (though not in sin). Enoch had this testimony, "that he pleased God." We can do our best to please men. But no man can be holy and without blame, when he knows he is doing the things he ought not to do, and leaving undone the things that he ought to do. To be without blame before Him who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart means that we must not sin; or else it is to say that God does not condemn sin; that we can be sinners, and yet without blame. What nonsense!

A real knockout blow, however, is handed a sinning religion in John's Gospel, eighth chapter, verses thirty-four to thirty-six inclusive. Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* And the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the Son abideth

ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, *ye shall be free indeed.*" If this is true, and you commit sin, you are not God's children but the servants of sin, for, "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Rom. 6:16). "No man," says Jesus, "can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). You cannot serve sin and righteousness, God and the devil, or heaven and hell, at the same time. The line must be drawn, discrimination made, and we must either be Christians and abstain from sin, or sinners and indulge in sin.

An old German once said in a testimony meeting, "I dank Got for barbed wire religion." This was a new kind to the writer, but we learned the significance of the statement later, and found that his idea was, that you could not sit on the fence, and, therefore, were compelled to be either on one side or the other. We might add that this is exactly what New Testament Christianity will do; it makes us take sides, and will not allow one to give place to, or compromise with, sin. Even to attempt to be neutral is impossible, as you will note from the words of Jesus, "He that is

not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30). The fact, therefore, that you are not for God, brands you as being against Him. May the good Lord save us from the standard of piety that labels us only Christians in name, and leaves us sinners by practice. Having a name to live, yet being dead.

Perhaps the reader, by this time, may have in his heart a desire to live a victorious life, but is inclined to believe that, being placed in his peculiar situation, it is impossible to do so. This is often the case; men in every vocation in life seem to think their lot is the most difficult, and their surroundings the most perplexing in which to live right. This is a mistake, for Paul assures us that "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man," and that "God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear." This is, indeed, a blessed promise, fraught with a world of encouragement to honest souls. It leaves everyone without excuse for his sins and permits no one to be tempted beyond the point of all possible resistance, and makes it possible for us to fulfill the scriptural injunction, "*Be not overcome*

with evil but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).

Though we might use numberless other scriptures to show God's attitude toward sin, and His provision for our deliverance, we will close this chapter with a very blessed and appropriate benediction from Jude 24, 25, "Now unto him that is able *to keep you from falling.*" Able to do what? *To keep you from falling.* Is he? *Is He?* Is He really able to keep us from falling, or is all this a mistake, or the product of a fanatical imagination? Is it possible that Jude is mistaken in this matter, just a little beside himself, overstepping the mark, and saying He is able when he meant unable? If Jude is right then the person who says we must sin is wrong, for if to sin is not to fall, pray tell me what, in the mind of the objector does it mean to fall? What does it take to constitute the defeat of a Christian? Reader, the Bible is a dependable book; read it, understand it, obey it, do not try to dodge its plain teaching; do not shirk your responsibility to God. Clean up, brace up, look up, and measure up; stop your sinning or else pull down your sign, take in your shingle, and no longer pro-

fess to be a Christian, when in practice you are a sinner.

Do not so grossly misrepresent the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and deny the possibilities of His grace, as to be a stumbling-block for sinners, the laughing-stock of infidels, and object of the pitiful contempt of high heaven. It is a strange thing, indeed, that you can ask in any average congregation, "How many are endeavoring to live without sin?" and you will find scarcely any, sometimes, perhaps, not a single member. Then turn and ask them, "How many are justified?" and nearly everyone of the same ones who say they are not living without sin, will say they are justified. This is simply to say that sinners are justified, God is reconciled to us while we are sinning. What a travesty on the salvation that cost the blood of God's own Son! We are sure that Jesus did not die that we might continue in sin. We are not only commanded not to sin, but we are also commanded "Not to be partakers of other men's sins," and still better yet to "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

But, says the objector, you have only used

scriptures of your own selection. There are others which prove that we must all sin. Let us present our side of the question. All right, we will do so. But to say that any scripture teaches the necessity of sin is a mistake, a fatal mistake. There are a few isolated passages, however, which have been misinterpreted until they seem to teach its necessity; but when properly interpreted the Bible never contradicts itself. In order, however, to give the objector a fair and impartial discussion of the matter, we will investigate these passages of the objector's selection. We have nowhere wrested a single scripture from its proper setting and meaning, and have been careful not to add to, or take away from the Word; for we have not forgotten that God's curse is upon the man who adds to or takes away from the words of His Book. We will now proceed to investigate what the caption of the following chapter implies, "The Other Side."

CHAPTER VII

THE OTHER SIDE

It often happens that in teaching and preaching the Bible we allow too much of our sectarian prejudice and denominational ideas to govern our interpretation. Thus the Bible has been interpreted from the Calvinistic standpoint, from the Wesleyan standpoint, or from the standpoint of Campbellism, and so on, and certain scriptures are often made to bend to a particular theory. We have tried to avoid any such manner of interpretation, and have sought, without preference or prejudice, to simply know the truth. God says in His Holy Word, "My people perish for lack of knowledge;" and surely this is true, for it is appalling to see the amount of ignorance concerning the Bible in this Christian land of ours. This is due to two causes, principally: First, the Bible is a spiritual book and must be spiritually understood; no sinner really has the right to interpret the Word of God, until he has first

been born again and knows the power and possibility of the gospel in his own life. As the apostle says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Second, because people study everything else in preference to the Bible; other books are read without number and the pages of the daily newspaper are eagerly devoured; while the Bible in many Christian homes is a dead letter, a neglected book. Because of this fact, all kinds of erroneous doctrines, such as Russellism, Eddyism, Romanism, and many other isms can get a following by preying upon the ignorance of the people in regard to what the scripture in fact does teach, and by seeking to please rather than to save men.

An incident showing how some people are acquainted with their Bibles, was related to the writer while on an evangelistic tour of the East. An old lady was reported to have stood up in a public service and declared that her favorite passage of scripture was, "Grin and bear it." When asked where this scripture could be found, she said she did not know

exactly, but thought it was Paul's letter to the Deuteronomies. Another lady in Southern Illinois wanted the writer to find the scripture, "He that saith he liveth and sinneth not is a liar and the truth is not in him," for, said she "This is a passage that I am especially interested in." Fortunately, there is no such scripture.

Of all the books in the world, it is more important that we should have a knowledge of the Bible than of any other: 1st, Because it is the word of life. 2nd, Because it is everybody's book, in the same sense that God's free air belongs to everyone, Roman Catholic priests to the contrary, notwithstanding. 3rd, Because upon the proper understanding of this book hangs our eternal destiny. Let us therefore look into the Word, and seek to know the truth at any cost. With this thought in mind we present to the reader the thought which is implied in the title of this chapter, "The Other Side."

It will do no good to argue that two and two are three; neither will it do us any good to contend that we must sin, and thus excuse ourselves in disobedience, unless it is really

true. What we want to know is *the truth,* the *whole truth,* and *nothing but the truth.* Whether it pleases or not, out with the truth, at any cost.

"If it is a fact," says the objector, "that we can be righteous and live above sin, why does Paul say, 'There is none righteous?' " If the reader will turn to Rom. 3:10 he will find, to begin with, that Paul never made such a statement, but is simply quoting an Old Testament passage, as you will note at the beginning of the verse, he says, "As it is written." But where is it written? Let us turn now to the Old Testament and see. (For always when it says, "it is written" in the New Testament, it signifies that the quotation is taken from the Old). In the fourteenth Psalm we read, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." You can thus see at once to whom the apostle refers, "the fool," "they are corrupt." Who? The fools. "They have done abominable works." Who? The fools. "There is none that doeth good." None of whom? The fools. The old proverbial saying perhaps is true, "Birds of a feather will flock together." So that when you see,

or rather hear, a man taking up for, and siding in with the none righteous crowd you may know what he is, according to the Psalmist. But back to the text again, as it is in Romans. Let us read the context, verse 11, "None that seeketh after God." So you can see that they had not become seekers after grace, much less finders; if in verse 10 Christians are meant, the same can be said of the following verses, and what a type of Christians they are. Christians without ever seeking God! Christians altogether become unprofitable, verse 12! Christians of which none are good! Christians who are deceitful, verse 13! Christians who curse, verse 14! Christians who are cruel, verse 15! Miserable Christians, verse 16! If this is a description of Christianity, to say the least, it is a very undesirable thing; and so far as the writer can see, there is not much advantage in being a Christian, over a sinner, for it would be impossible to be worse than a Christian. But conclusive proof that these are not Christians, is to be found in verse 17. The distinguishing quality between a sinner and a Christian is peace. "There is no peace to the wicked" (Isa. 48:22). But they that

are justified by faith have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Yet those of whom it is said, "There is none righteous," had never known the way of peace; they were not even backsliders, for *the way of peace they had not known.*

The reader must remember that the Bible is a book that condemns sin first, last and all the time. Whenever any scripture is interpreted to condone sin, you may rest assured it has been wrested from its proper meaning; for such an interpretation would irreconcilably contradict the general teaching of the Bible. If Paul is made to refer to Christians in Romans three, he is made to contradict himself time and again elsewhere in the Word. (See Rom. 6:1-14; Rom. 8:1; Eph. 4:27; 1 Cor. 15:34; 1 Thess. 4:7, 8; Rom. 6:22; 1 John 5:18, and others).

We are told by Paul elsewhere that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Is it possible that we could be without understanding, not even seekers after God, unprofitable, deceitful, swift to shed blood, cursing, miserable, and without peace, and yet be without condemnation? If

this combined catalogue of undesirables will not receive condemnation, pray tell me what in the mind of the objector, will it take to do so; yet if these do receive condemnation, then they were not in Christ Jesus.

Strange it is, indeed, that souls should prefer to wrest the scriptures to their own damnation (1 Pet. 3:16) rather than face the issue, and measure up to their responsibilities and privileges in grace. Such conduct is possibly due to the fact that the carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7). What excuse has anyone to try to make such a motley crowd as is represented in Rom. 3:10-17 to mean Christians, and assume, therefore, that no one can live righteous? "He that saith he abideth in him *ought himself also to walk even as he walked*" (1 John 2:16). Is there none righteous? Then John's record of Zacharias and Elizabeth is false, for he asserts, "And *they were both righteous before God,* walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). None righteous did you say? What a mistake the Savior made in telling us of a certain class who need no repentance. "I came not to call *the right-*

eous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). The none righteous crowd forgot to read all their Bible, but, like a certain silly bird that sticks its head in the sand and thinks it is entirely hidden, they stick their faces in Rom. 3:10 and think "there is none righteous." They forgot to examine this epistle further, or they would have learned that, "For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one *shall many be made righteous"* (Rom. 5:19). In fact, almost from the beginning of time, it will be found that righteousness was the privilege of every human being (See Heb. 11:4). If there is none righteous, the inspired statement of James concerning effectual prayer is misleading, when he says, "The effectual fervent prayer *of a righteous man* availeth much" (James 5:16). What is the significance of Peter's statement, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the *righteous,* and his ears are open unto their prayers?" (1 Pet. 3.12). How could the eyes of the Lord be over the righteous, if there are no righteous? But hear John the beloved, "Little children let no man deceive you: he that doeth

righteousness *is righteous,* even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7).

We have not exhausted the supply of scriptures on this subject by any means, but we pass on with one concluding thought in regard to the "none righteous" ones. We are sure this is not the standard of Christianity the reader will want when he is dying. And we are indeed grateful that better things are possible. If we could have only one request in all the world granted, it would not be that we should be like these, but rather that we might, in the last moments of our life, have a testimony like Hezekiah: "I beseech thee, Oh Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight" (2 Kings 20:3). He did not say that he had done things he ought not have done, and failed in doing what he should have done; that he sinned every day, and so on. No, thank God, this was not his type of piety. Here is one man that could do that which was right in God's sight. But there are others who have been able also to measure up to the standard of righteous living, as you will note from the

following: 1 Thess. 2:10; Heb. 11:5, and others.

The next scripture, which we will discuss, is about as popular as Rom. 3:10 with the "sin or bust" crowd, and is found in 1 John 1:8. This passage, however, is often misquoted by those who seek to make it a camouflage for their sins, and is made to read, "He that saith he liveth and sinneth not is a liar," when, in fact, it really reads, "If we say that we *have* no sin, we deceive ourselves." This is an altogether different expression. To have sin, and to commit sin are distinct and different things; one refers to sin in the inherent sense, and the other to sin in the actual sense; one has to do with condition, the other with action. So that in reality, the sin referred to here is inbred, or original sin. The context will serve to show this more definitely: "If we walk in the light?" Who walks in the light? Not sinners. Christians alone walk in the light; they that are born of God and "doeth no sin" (R. V.). For no man can walk in the light and continue in a course of known, wilful sin. If we walk in the light, the blood cleanseth us from all sin. Does what? Cleanseth us. Why

not forgiveth us? Because actual sin has already been forgiven, and the subject for cleansing is now walking in the light, victorious over sin; but the sin referred to, which cannot be forgiven because it is condition rather than action, must yet be cleansed from the soul. Therefore, "if we say we have no sin" (inherent sin), to be cleansed from, we deceive ourselves; not if we say we do not commit sin (which is actual sin, or sin in practice), which is forgiven, and nowhere referred to in this text. The text deals with, and has relation to, inherent sin, and not to transgression. This is exactly what thousands are doing, maintaining stoutly in spite of reason and experience, that pardon is complete redemption, and that they have no further need. "We have no sin to be cleansed from." If such is your position, "you deceive yourself," says John. Thus many are robbed of the grace of heart purity, either by saying we have no sin to be cleansed from, we are completely cleansed at conversion, and so on, (which is contrary to creeds, scripture and experience), or else by denying and repudiating God's purpose and power to perfectly cleanse them from *all* sin in this life.

In either case, the result is the same; they miss God's best.

John, the writer of the epistle to which we have referred, was familiar with the malady of sin; He knew its twofold nature, as recognized by every Bible student who is considered orthodox, and knew the race must be cleansed from original sin as well as to be pardoned of actual sin; must be baptized by the Spirit as well as born of the Spirit; must be sanctified as well as justified. Hence, he is admonishing us to be cleansed. Do not stand in your own way by saying you have no sin, or need no cleansing, for unless you have been sanctified, in addition to being justified, there yet remains inherent sin in the soul; and though walking in the light, and reconciled to God, you need the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, to cleanse you from all sin. But whatever you do, never try to hide behind this scripture as an excuse to continue in sin. Put the scripture in its proper place and determine, by God's help, to measure up to your possibilities. Do not fall in with sin; do not plead its cause; do not identify yourself with it; for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

We pass on now to the third passage, found in Romans, seventh chapter. We will not read the entire chapter, but simply that portion of it misinterpreted as an apology for sin. I am always reminded, when I see the multitude trying to hide behind what they interpret as Paul's experience, of a certain passage of scripture which intimates that the length of the bed and the width of the cover is insufficient for the occupant's comfort. So when I see the multitude seeking rest, and trying to cover up their sins with this chapter, I say, alas, for the bed is too short and the cover is too narrow. When the chapter is properly interpreted it furnishes neither rest for the sinner, nor a camouflage for his sins. A futile attempt is made by some to prove from this chapter that Paul was a sinner by practice all his life; hence, they argue, inasmuch as he was wretched, and did what he would not, and was carnal, they never expect to be better than Paul.

To say the least, if these statements are a picture of Paul's experience as a Christian, they decidedly contradict his statements made elsewhere. In the sixth chapter he is trium-

phant, in the seventh wretched; in the eighth victorious, and in the seventh defeated. Such conflicting statements concerning a man's conduct, if referring to the same time in his life, would be repudiated as reliable testimony by any court in the world; these testimonies evidently do not refer to the experience of the apostle at one and the same time. Observe the statements in chapter seven. Verse 14, "I am carnal;" verse 15, "For that which I do I allow not;" verse 19, "For the good that I would I do not;" verse 23, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind;" verse 24, "Oh wretched man that I am." Do these statements compare with those made in chapter six? "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin;" "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body;" "For sin shall not have dominion over you;" "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin."

Even the casual reader can see that these statements of chapter six are irreconcilable with those of chapter seven. We must therefore seek the proper solution; for rest as-

sured, when Paul is properly understood he will not contradict himself. The only logical conclusion is, of course, that he is referring to his experience and the possibilities of grace at two different times in his life; and is showing, in chapter seven, his experience as Saul, the Hebrew. The seventh chapter of Romans is a kind of parenthetical chapter, thrown into this epistle, evidently for the benefit of the Jews, for "them that know the law," as you will note in the first verse of the chapter. Here the apostle is undoubtedly relating his experience as Saul of Tarsus, and not as Paul, the Christian, as is seen from the following. In all the chapter, neither God, nor Christ, nor the Holy Spirit ever appear upon the field of action; they are not factors in the struggle. From the first to the last it is I-I-I I, myself, and so on. This is never the way Paul speaks of his experience as a Christian; he invariably recognizes the companionship of Christ after his conversion. Hear him, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me : and the life I now live," etc. "I am crucified with Christ." "For me to live is Christ," and so on. With these and many other like

statements he shows the necessity of Christ to the Christian. "No man" as we once heard Dr. E. F. Walker say, "can live without a liver." The Christian's liver is, "Christ in you the hope of glory." What is the propelling power of Christianity? It is Christ in you the hope of glory. What is the secret of spiritual power? It is Christ in you. What is the secret of the victorious life? It is Christ in you, whom the apostle never once intimates that he possesses in this chapter.

As is plainly seen by verses four to seven, he is trying to persuade his brethren (the Jews) to accept Christ as the promised Messiah, the efficient Savior; and proceeds to demonstrate, by his experience as Saul, the Hebrew of the Hebrews,—a Pharisee (Phil. 3:25), his inability to measure up to his high ideals, and privileges of grace, as made possible through Christ. As Saul the Hebrew, he was only doing what thousands of ceremonial Christians are doing today, without an indwelling Christ; trying to be Christians without Christ; doing those things they would not, leaving undone the things they should do; carnal, sold

under sin. "Oh wretched man that I am," he continues, and so on.

Thank God, the story does not end in this dark final. Paul has found something better than ceremonial, Old Testament, and imputed righteousness; he has found the better way, the new covenant, the victorious life (see Heb. 10:1-14); and climaxes his dark picture of Romans seven with the question, "Who shall deliver me?" "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," says he; and proceeds further in the eighth chapter to show his Jewish brethren in Rome the benefits of Christ to the lost and ruined race. He shows that wherein the law was weak, God, manifest in the flesh, in the person of His Son, came to condemn and deliver from sin. "There is, therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Reader, are you living in the experience of wretchedness, or have you found blessed deliverance?

Says the distinguished commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, in his preface to this chapter, "The apostle, having in the preceding chapter shown the converted Gentiles the obligations they were under to live a holy life, ad-

dressed himself here to the Jews, who might hesitate to embrace the gospel, lest, by this means, they should renounce the law, which might appear to them as a renunciation of their allegiance to God. As they rested in the law as sufficient for justification and sanctification, it was necessary to convince them of their mistake. That the law is insufficient for their justification the apostle proves in chapters three, four and five, that it is insufficient for sanctification, he proves in this chapter, and introduces his discourse by showing that a believing Jew is discharged from his obligation to the law, and is at liberty to come under another and much happier constitution, viz., that of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly, Paul is dealing here with the Jew, and is relating in this chapter his experience as a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews—and as touching the law a Pharisee. He is, therefore, endeavoring to convince them of the advantages of the gospel over the law, the new covenant over the old." These differences are plainly noticeable to all Bible students, and every reader can surely discern the differences between, and advantages of, Christianity over

Judaism, of the new birth over ceremonial righteousness. Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, was a devout Jew, thoroughly familiar with the customs, ceremonial and religious rites of Judaism; yet the new birth, as taught by and made possible in Christ, seemed to be an entirely new and unknown privilege to him. It would be a difficult task perhaps to determine to just what extent Old Testament piety was imputed and imparted. It would not do to say that all their piety was imputed, and that they possessed no actual quality of righteousness in any other degree, and that there were no righteous men except ceremonially; for undoubtedly there were many noble, honorable, religious characters whose fidelity to God, and faithfulness to their calling, made them to stand out on the pages of sacred history as beacon lights in dark places. To say the least, however, it must be generally conceded that they lived in a period of the world's history before the culmination of the great redemptive plan; and were not blest with such possibilities as are New Testament or new dispensation Christians living in the pentecostal era.

Upon this question the eminent theologian and Greek student, Dr. Daniel Steele, has the following to say: "The Old Testament conversion was a moral change wrought by the will of the penitent, influenced by the Spirit of God, rather than a new creation or a new birth. The very surprise of Nicodemus indicates that the idea of regeneration as a radical, spiritual transformation was unfamiliar to the Jewish mind. The predominant purpose may be changed from vice to virtue in reliance on divine help, as in the case of reformed drunkards, without regeneration. This is our idea of conversion during the Mosaic dispensation and under the preaching of John the Baptist. To assert that John's converts were spiritually changed is to declare that John lost in a few months more regenerated probationers for Jesus than Methodism has ever lost in her entire history of a hundred and fifty years. There are many Old Testament converts in our modern churches.

"It naturally follows that there was no permanent state of reconciliation, because there was no permanent basis for it in an atonement

made once for all and all-sufficient for all time (See Heb. 10th chapter). There was through offerings, a temporary peace of mind attained, but no satisfaction concerning the whole standing of the sinner before God. Full pardon was in the future."

If the Old Testament plan could have accomplished God's full purpose concerning the redemption of man, then the new plan need not have been inaugurated. Therefore, says Paul, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." (See further Heb. 7:14-19; Heb. 13:9-12, and others). These scriptures, and many others, simply show the advantages, the possibilities, and the opportunities, of the New Testament over those of the Old. The conflict of Romans seven is that of a Jew under the law, and is in sharp contrast to the possibilities of grace as shown in chapter eight.

There is no Christianity without Christ. Many people say, "I'm afraid that I can't live it." This is right, I can't. God never in-

tended the personal pronoun I to live a Christian life; but, "I can do all things *through Christ* which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:14). *I* can "be strong in the Lord and in the *power of his might*" (Eph. 6:10). Christ dwelling in your heart, by faith, is the secret of spiritual victory He can bring you out of the seventh chapter of Romans, "O wretched man that I am," into the eighth, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

The degree of light and grace always determines a man's responsibility; do not, therefore, deny the possibilities of New Testament grace by trying to make a camouflage of Paul's testimony here of the insufficiency and incompleteness of the plan under Old Testament provision. Do not overlook the fact that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. If the Gospel of Jesus Christ can do no better for a soul than Romans seven, then the gospel is as great a failure in the reconstruction of character as the law, and the highest standard of Christianity is one of defeat and wretchedness, which is contrary to the entire teaching of the New Testament.

Is it a fact that Christianity means defeat? Is it a fact that Christianity means wretchedness? Away with such perversions of God's purpose and plan concerning His people! Away with such interpretation of the Christian life, as would make it a helpless, hopeless life of defeat and failure, forever trying to do the impossible! Such an exegesis of the scriptures is the product of men who neither admire the beauties of a holy life, nor know the purpose and plan of Almighty God in regard to His people. Away with the idea that the gospel is inadequate to the needs of humanity! Away with the gospel which presents an inefficient Christ! Stand back, make way, ye false interpreters of God's holy Word, who see nothing but daily defeat and humiliation! Let the apostle be heard: "Thanks be unto God who *always* causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14). Here is victory, not defeat!

One more thought, and we are through with this passage. The objector may say that this could not be Paul's past experience, for the phraseology of the text is in the present tense. "I am carnal," not "I was carnal." "Wretched man that *I am,*" not "wretched man that I was

or used to be." This objection carries no weight, however, as it is permissible and often expedient, in illustrating a past event, in order to make the language more effective, to use present-tense phraseology. For illustration, a friend of the writer's often uses the present tense to express an occurrence of many years ago. In relating to an audience today an experience during the Civil War, he says: "I am standing before Vicksburg, looking into the cannon's mouth." Not that he is at this time standing there, many years having passed since the scene described actually took place, but he uses the present tense to make the description of the scene more impressive, vivid and effective. This is precisely what the apostle has done here; and while pressing this picture of his past experiences upon his hearers, he resorts to a description of the past, in present terms, in order that his appeal may be more effective. Dear reader, let us not minimize the possibilities of God's grace, but let us rather exalt Jesus as an ever-present, efficient Savior, "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25).

It would seem to the writer useless to con-

tinue further with this discussion, but because a few other isolated passages here and there have been picked out by our "sin or bust" theologians as texts upon which to base their arguments sustaining a sinning religion, we wish the reader to know we have not intentionally dodged the issue to present only our side of the question. We, therefore, note the two following scriptures, Eccl. 7:20 and 1 Kings 8:46. These two scriptures seem to be a sure refuge for the persons who are so afraid of living above sin; and they read them with great assurance, and congratulate themselves that they have now at last found an unanswerable argument to sustain a sinning religion, but this will be no new thing, for there are over six hundred religions in the world, we are told, and most of them are the refuges of sinners. But there is only one salvation, and that *saves from sin.*

We could go on here to say that, even admitting under the Old Testament plan that there was no man that did not sin, what right have we to measure ourselves by those who lived in the dim light of the Old Testament, "which was only a shadow of things to

come." Increased light means increased responsibilities. It is neither wisdom nor piety, therefore, to try to dodge the issue by seeking out and misinterpreting an Old Testament scripture, in the hope of making it a subterfuge for your hypocrisy. Undoubtedly, the New Testament standard of piety is much in advance of the Old, as will be seen by the general order of the teachings of Christ. In the Old Testament it was "an eye for an eye," in the New, "love your enemies;" in the Old, "thou shalt not kill," in the New, "he that hateth his brother is a murderer;" in the Old, "thou shalt not commit adultery," in the New, "He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." For a man, in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to try to justify himself in sin, by comparing himself with those living in the light that humanity had three thousand years ago, is inexcusable ignorance.

But to the text, what is its soultion? The truth of the matter is that both of these texts are mistranslations, and both from the same cause. The reader of the Bible well knows it is God's Book, given by Divine inspiration,

but that the translation from the original languages of Hebrew and Greek were made by human hands only, hence the error in both cases. But why the mistranslation? "Because," says Dr. Adam Clarke, concerning 1 Kings 8:46, "on this verse we may observe that the second clause, as it is here translated, renders the supposition in the first clause entirely negatory; for if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say if they sin. But this contradiction is taken away by reference to the original, which should be translated, 'If they sin against thee, for there is no man that *may* not sin' . . .the truth is the Hebrew has no mood to express this sense in the permissive or optative way; but to express this sense it uses the future tense of the conjugation Kal." The same exegesis is given also of Eccl. 7:20. Owing to the peculiarity of the Hebrew language which seems to lack a potential mood, both of these passages translated 'sinneth not' should be properly translated 'may not sin," which is true; there is no man *that may not sin,* but *there is none that must.* Thus the proper translation, like the morning sun

clears away the fog, lightens the truth, and sweeps away every subterfuge for sin.

One more scripture, and we will conclude this chapter. Matt. 19:17. Here the objector has reached the climax, for presumably he has listed the Savior on his side. Surely Jesus would not misstate the case, yet He says: "None good but God." Why do so many people try to wrest one passage of scripture from its proper meaning and give it an interpretation that is flatly contradicted by a hundred other passages? How does it happen that of all other scriptures, that teach the possibility of being good, they happened to find this one? Why did they not call our attention to Matt. 12:35: "*A good man* out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things," etc.? Why did they not find Acts 11:24, "For he was *a good man* full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"? or why not look upon John 5:28, 29 as an incentive to better living, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; *they that have done good,* unto the resurrection of life," etc. Or why not face the issue

like a man, with Paul's admonition to Timothy as an incentive? (2 Tim. 2:3), "Thou therefore endure hardness as a *good* soldier of Jesus Christ." There are many, many other scriptures which teach both the advisability and necessity of being good. How did it happen that these were all missed, and the objector happened to lodge in Matt. 19:17? The reason is obvious; he is seeking to justify himself in his sins. Other scriptures, however, are too plainly against him, for him to carry out his purpose, and inasmuch as these do not teach what he wants to believe, as a drowning man would grasp at a straw, so he seizes this scripture, perverts its meaning, and tries to shirk his responsibility before God.

But, alas! This passage, like all others when wrested from their proper meaning, fails to justify them in their sins. Undoubtedly, the goodness referred to in the text is absolute or infallible goodness, and it is true no mortal is *absolutely good.* God alone has absolute goodness; He only is fundamentally and infallibly good; and, in this sense, He is the only source of good. We, the children of men, are "by nature, the children of wrath;" and

"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." There is no one who is naturally good, none but God. All our goodness is derived goodness, goodness that comes from God. Just as the moon has no light in itself, and could not shine if it were not for the sun from which it derives its light, so, no person in the world is good, in and of himself, save God; and all our good comes from Him. Probably this is the very lesson that Jesus wanted to teach this young man, whose goodness up to this time seems to have consisted chiefly of what *he had done,* rather than what God had done for and in him.

This truth is more definitely brought out in the revised version, which, instead of reading "none good," reads "one there is who is good." If this passage could be interpreted so as to mean there were no good people in the world, it would contradict the entire purpose and plan of salvation, and leave us in hopeless despair, with a future too dark to contemplate.

A preacher of the gospel once stood outside the tabernacle where the writer was preaching Jesus as a sufficient Savior, and able to save to the uttermost, and as he puffed his

cigar, (so we are told) said, "He that is without sin let him cast the first stone." And thus, in his ignorance, and lost in the fog of his cheap cigar, he could not distinguish the difference between a New Testament Christian, and a crowd of Pharisees, with malice, envy hatred and murder in their hearts. These are the ones to whom this language was addressed. Perhaps the distinguished clergyman (distinguished for his ignorance of the truth) had never read what the Master had to say about this same crowd. Listen! "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5: 20). Why should a preacher of the gospel want to compare a Christian to a set of malicious Pharisees, whose hearts were filled with hatred instead of love, and who were even then trying to trap the Master that they might destroy Him? An individual must certainly be hard pressed for some grounds upon which to justify himself in his sins to resort to such perversion of the Bible.

Let us say in conclusion, that no scripture, properly interpreted will ever justify a soul

in sin. Upon this question hinges our eternal destiny; it will, therefore, pay the reader to weigh the matter well, and to know the truth. It is better to be sure than to be sorry. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who *did no sin,* neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:21, 22).

CHAPTER VIII

CONSEQUENCES

As a conclusion we now approach the grave results, or consequences of sin. We cannot attach too much importance to the question of sin and how to deal with it. It is the element in life that settles our eternal destiny for happiness or misery, life or death, heaven or hell. And though many treat it with levity and indifference, yet it is destined to be the deciding factor in their lives, for good or bad, weal or woe, joy or sorrow both here and hereafter. Of all questions in the world that need our careful, prayerful and earnest consideration, there is none equal in importance to the sin question. I care not what the duties or responsibilities or problems, which the reader must face may be, it is safe to say that no one of them, or all of them combined, equal in importance the matter of properly settling the sin question, upon which hangs the destiny of our immortal souls.

The sooner the human family looks upon sin as the horrible malady that it is; the sooner we will have a proper conception of its inevitable consequences, and the sooner will we be made to see that it is no essential part of Christian character; and that God desires and demands us to break with it here and now.

Who can describe the appalling consequences of sin? It is the author of every sorrow in the world; it inspires every lie; it is back of every plot; it is the propelling motive back of every wicked act; it seeks to obstruct every move for the betterment of mankind. If there is a man killed, sin is at the bottom of it; if a bank is robbed, sin is at the bottom of it; if there is a girl betrayed, sin is primarily the cause of it. It promotes all evil, and seeks to hinder all righteousness, wherever it is tolerated. If there is a move on to further civic righteousness, sin opposes it. If there is a campaign on to save souls, sin obstructs it in every possible way. It mars our happiness here; it mars our health here; it mars our usefulness here, and damns our immortal souls hereafter. Surely when we see its dire results on every hand, we would think no self-respect-

ing or decent person would ever want to be identified with it. But, alas! here they are in great numbers, and worse yet, they are not atheists or infidels, but those who claim to be the devout followers of Jesus Christ; those who frequent the places of worship, and go away with the gospel of life and death still ringing in their ears. They are the ones who, in their mad pursuit of fun and frolic, act as if they had never heard the sacred declarations of God concerning the inevitable results of sin; as if "The soul that sinneth it shall die," "The wages of sin is death," "Be sure your sin will find you out," "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and many other like statements had no relation whatever to them, or their sins. In fact, you would think by their conduct that they had received a special revelation from God assuring them that all such statements had to do with others only, they themselves being by special divine favor exonerated.

Be it known to the reader that there is nothing more certain than the consequences of sin. No man can sin and escape the result of his disobedience. God's declaration, "What-

soever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap," is His infallible truth; and the only sure way not to reap the result of your sins, *is not to sin.*

If you would not reap, you must not sow. An erroneous idea has gone out in some places in regard to reaping. Some seem to think that they can continue in sin as they will, and then, when finally pardoned, escape the reaping. This is a great mistake. One of God's unchangeable laws is that what we sow we shall also reap; and so it is. True, pardon does spare us from the condemnation of hell; but there are thousands of Christians who are unquestionably saved from hell and its terrible retribution; yet they are reaping what they have sown. Here is a man who unequally yoked himself in business with an unbeliever. He is saved himself, perhaps, but has heaped upon himself many unnecessary burdens; he is reaping what he sowed. The same may be said in domestic life; homes broken, lives saddened, though the past is forgiven, they are saved at great needless cost to themselves. They are reaping what they sowed. Here again is a man who deferred salvation until late in life, and would now give anything he

possesses if he could adjust matters that have now passed beyond his power; yet he himself is saved though as by fire and is suffering great loss. What is the matter? He is reaping what he sowed.

Observe this in the very laws of nature. There are certain laws in the natural and physical world which cannot be broken without consequences. For illustration: There is a law in the physical world which says that alcohol intoxicates. The only way, therefore, to avoid being drunk is never to drink alcoholic liquors. There is a law in the natural world which says that fire burns. No one disputes this, and every intelligent person governs himself accordingly. Why? Because he knows that to break these laws means to suffer the inevitable result. The only sure way not to get burned is to keep out of the fire.

There is, again, a law in the natural world which we call gravitation. This law says that all matter is drawn to the center of the earth. Do you doubt it? Go yonder to that precipice and leap off, and see whether you will ascend or descend. You well know that you will go down. Why? Because the law

of gravitation has so declared it. If the majesty of God's laws is such in the natural, material, and physical world that they cannot be broken without an inevitable consequence, have we any reason to believe that His laws in the moral and spiritual world are of less magnitude? The same God whose law says that fire burns, also says, "The wages of sin is death." We have abundant reasons, in fact, to believe that His moral and spiritual laws are as rigid and firm as to consequences, as His natural and physical laws.

But you say, "Are there no exceptions to the rule?" There are none in the natural, therefore, we should expect none in the spiritual. Let us illustrate: The law of gravitation says all matter is drawn to the earth. Yonder is a child innocently playing near a third story window. It suddenly, in looking over the sill, loses its balance and topples headlong to the pavement below. The child is innocent; God is love; yet He does not suddenly reverse the order of His law and save the child. The majesty of His laws is such that they cannot be broken. If they could, we might expect almost anything, in fact

we might get up some morning to find that ice would burn, and fire freeze, and so on.

His spiritual laws are equally majestic, and cannot be broken without the inevitable consequences. Hence, "the wages of sin is death." And just as certainly as water drowns, and fire burns, and gravitation crushes, just so surely does sin produce death and inevitably hell. In fact, God does not say that "The soul that sinneth, he will kill," but "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" that is, sin itself will produce death. Just as if I should give a man a dose of poison, I would not need to kill him, the poison itself would produce the death, and upon the same principle sin produces death, physically, spiritually, and eternally (the second death, Rev. 20:14). Hell is the inevitable consequence of sin; and there is no respect of persons. Let us see. Did God spare Adam? Did He spare the antediluvians? Did He spare Sodom? Surely, if His commandments could have been broken and disregarded without a consequence He would never have suffered His Son to die. But listen to the words of Holy Writ: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell,

and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . . the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly, out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. 2:4-9).

Need we picture the first pair driven from that beautiful garden for one offence? Need we show you a world in the midst of one great deluge, the remnant of a God-forgetting, sin-loving multitude of human wretches, scrambling to, and scaling the mountain peaks, vainly trying to escape the consequence of their sins, until the last miserable sinner is strangled in the midst of a sea that knows no shore? Need we picture for you the wicked, bragging, scoffing inhabitants of Sodom, as, horrified in the midst of God's awful judgments, they run out into the streets to find the heavens on fire, and raining everlasting burnings upon them in terrible consequence of their sins? Need we call your attention to the doleful cry that comes from the blackness of outer darkness for "water to cool my tongue"? Does not that pitiful cry touch your flinty heart? Reader, do all these facts from the pages of God's Word mean nothing to you? Do they

not make you think of the jeopardy of your soul? Oh, but you say, I do not believe them. Exactly. And upon what do you base your unbelief, that you are willing to risk the destiny of your immortal soul? Upon what ground do you fly into the face of the plain statements of God's Word, and wrest the scriptures to your own destruction? As surely as righteousness is rewarded with heaven, just so surely is sin punished with hell.

But the consequences of sin are not always shoved off into hell. There are visible evidences of its dire results here and now. Its hypnotic and deceptive influence is seen every day. Why do men cleave to that which mars their happiness here, and proves their destruction hereafter? Why will they insist on serving him who at present tempts, but will soon torment them? Why will they prefer wrong to right, darkness to light, the devil to God, and hell to heaven? There is but one answer. They are not themselves. Sin has perverted their God-given sense of right and their endowments to discern that which is their best and highest good, until they are

used for their destruction instead of their salvation.

So manifest is the hypnotic power of sin, that it makes men think that because they prosper in their sins God has forgotten to execute judgment against them. On the contrary God sometimes leaves a man to prosper in his wickedness, withdraws His providential impediments, and leaves him to pursue unhampered and unhindered, his evil projects; allows him to burn incense to his lust, feed his appetites, satisfy his base desires, and to continue in his villainy and indifference; but for all these things He has plainly declared, "He will bring thee into judgment."

It is true that not always is the consequence of sin manifest here, but if not here, it is sure to meet you hereafter. "*Be sure* your sin will find you out." Men seem to think that because retribution is delayed, it is cancelled. As the wise man thus expresses it, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). Delayed punishment

likewise makes men reason that because wicked men flourish, live in luxury, and die in plenty, God will not unsheathe the sword of His vengeance hereafter, because He has not done so here. Such Satan has made his greatest ally in beguiling and keeping others in darkness, they flattering themselves that somehow, eventually, they will miss retribution, miss hell, and miss an awful eternity. They say, "Others may reap but not us, others may die but not us," and thus they continue in sin. But, alas! they are doomed to an awful awakening, for, like a miserable criminal upon whom judgment is passed, and who is waiting for the day of execution, so they are under judgment, and it is only a question of time until the full penalty of a broken law must be met. Then it is that the Almighty will unsheathe His sword of vengeance, as despised mercy, abused justice, the broken law, and rejected love, all stand before them in awful accusation, and demand that the penalty of the broken law be executed.

The dreadful consequences of sin are further seen in its hypnotic power to persuade men to wait until the last minute, or the hour of death, for repentance. And thus the terrors of the law,

the threatenings of Sinai, the bottomless pit, the gnawing worm, the quenchless flame, the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, all mean nothing to them because they are deceived, and believe there is plenty of time and that there is no danger, for they can repent and be saved any time they care to do so. So that in reality their main business is not to quit their sins and live for God but merely to time their repentance so as to avoid the hand of retribution being laid upon them. If men can just be shrewd and quick enough to do this it will be all right with them. They will have enjoyed the pleasures of sin, and reaped the rewards of righteousness.

But, alas! we cannot repent at our own discretion. Sin has so estranged us from God that no man can come to the Father except he be drawn by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44). No man can repent until he is first convicted of his sins and his need. This is the office work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). Add to these and other like scriptures such declarations as the following: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," and "Seek ye the Lord *while he may be found.*"

There is but one sensible and logical conclusion, and that is that we must seek God when His Spirit is striving with us, and while He may be found. The very fact that the old prophet says, *"while he may be found,"* shows that *there is coming a time when He cannot be found.* Yet as one of its awful consequences, sin, with its deceitful, deceptive power, would lead its victims down to hell, by urging them to delay repentance, until the Spirit grieved has taken His flight from them, and it is too late.

God pity the people in whom sin has so predominated as to rob them of their God-given and inherent right, a chance to make heaven their home. It had been better for them never to have been born, or to have been born brutes, or serpents, rather than that they should be intelligent creatures, made in the image of God, responsible for their own destiny, and, of their own choice, refuse to break with sin, die without grace, and be turned into hell, with all that forget God.

Another reason for the consequences of sin is seen in the fact that God has a government; and in order to have a good government He

must have laws, but in order to have laws that are effective He must have penalties attached to them. It often happens that in this life justice is defeated because of certain influences brought to bear, one way or another, upon the case. But not so at God's bar of judgment; everything there shall be revealed, and He "will judge the world in righteousness." One writing in regard to this says, God must maintain His own character; He cannot look upon sin with indifference. No honest sheriff can pass men unnoticed whom he knows to be guilty of wilful and constant violation of the law. No true judge can release those without punishment who have been proven guilty at His bar. No jailor can afford to open his prison doors and let the guilty go unpunished. A holy God cannot let individuals, communities and nations, which trample upon His commandments, reject His mercies and defy His authority, go unnoticed. There must be law in the universe, and it must be enforced and in the end the guilty must suffer. There is only one way to escape the punishment of God and that is to be found in repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, that men

would make haste to repent! "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

Manifest as are the results of sin on every hand, it would seem almost impossible to think that anyone would have the temerity and audacity to deny it. Yet I hear the pitiful dupes of Mrs. Eddy's false and fatal exposition of the Bible advocating that there is no such thing as sin. "Sin and mortality are native nothingness." It would have been far more compatible with good sense and sound judgment had they asserted that Christian Science or Eddyism was native nothingness. Says Mrs. Eddy, that blind leader of the blind, "Sin, sickness and death, are a belief only." Such nonsense! It reminds us of what a friend once said of this miserable cult. "It reminded him of a guinea pig," said he, "for a guinea pig is neither guinea nor pig, so with Christian Science, it is neither Christian nor science." If there is no sin, what was the object of Christ's mission? (Matt. 1:21; 1 John 3:8). What is the meaning of such scriptures as 1 John 5:17; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 6:11-14, and many others which we have neither the time nor space to cite here? If there is no sin what

is it that makes men rebel against holy living? If there is no sin, what is it that has filled our jails, our asylums, our alms-houses? What is it that makes that army of drunkards, that army of libertines, that army of aristocratic God-forgetters, tramp, tramp, tramping on their way to the land of endless death? Is all this only "native nothingness"? Can we not observe the consequences of sin all about us? Lo, it is here; its dire results can be seen on every hand, the daily papers are full of it, the Bible pictures its results in no unmistakable terms, while the entire human family have felt its heavy hand upon them.

Its present results can further be seen by the fact that it produces guilt and condemnation wherever it goes. We would not say like some that "there is no pleasure in sin," for we do not believe that this is true. If there were no pleasure in sin, Satan would have no pull on humanity. But its pleasures are only temporal and are more than offset by its consequences, its remorse, its shame, its guilt, and its condemnation. Many sinners try to appear happy; but in the still hours of the night, when they are alone, and conscience

has a chance to speak, then it is that they are reminded of their great need. They appear to have no concern regarding their souls, but danger of immediate death brings the most arrogant and proud to their knees. Oh, who can picture a man with the weight of sin upon his conscience? A man with a clear conscience is always master of the situation. But a man with a guilty conscience though he be a king, yet is a slave.

Says Rev. Mr. South, the eminent Presbyterian divine, "God has annexed two great evils to every sin in opposition to the pleasure and profit of it; to wit, shame and pain. He has by an eternal and most righteous decree, made these two the inseparable effects and consequences of sin. They are the wages assigned it by the laws of heaven, so that, whosoever commits it ought to account shame and punishment as belonging to him by rightful inheritance; for it is God who has joined them together by an irreversible sentence and it is not in the power or art of man to put them asunder." Certain it is that many illustrations of this truth could be given, from both sacred and profane history, which we have not the

space here to relate, such as David, Joseph's brethren, Haman, and others. Retribution always follows sin; if it does not catch the sinner here, it will hereafter. 1 Tim. 5:24, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after;" and Col. 3:25, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

But, says one, I am not a great sinner like these you have mentioned. I am not like David, or Haman, or Judas, or other such characters. True, you may not be an adulterer or a murderer, or willingly betray your Lord. Yet let us not boast too largely until we see what the standard of righteousness is. "He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her . . . hath already committed adultery," etc. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." Be this as it may, there is no greater adulterer than he who, having pledged his love and devotion to God, goes a whoring after the world. There is no greater murderer in the eyes of the Lord than he who kills not only the body, but damns both body and soul in hell by his worldly, indifferent neglect of his soul's es-

sential needs. It would be better to steal pennies out of a blind man's tin cup than to rob souls of their blood-bought privileges, by indifference and infidelity.

But finally, and sadder yet, the consequences of sin are not confined to this world; and scenes more terrible, and retribution still greater than any yet encountered in this world, await the sinner in the future. Just what these will be we can only know by what God has been pleased to reveal to us in His Word. Human speculation and supposition in this matter are absolutely worthless. God alone knows, and His word only, is authority. Thousands are glad to tell you what they think and believe, and imagination is allowed to run to the extreme. Opinions, varied and abundant, are given freely. What we may believe in the matter, however, does not alter the case. We are apt to consider our feelings in this matter to such an extent as to allow them, rather than the Word of God to shape our convictions; thus many people believe, and argue, and contend that there is no hell; partly because it is not what they care to believe and it not palatable to their taste; thus the revealed truth is

discarded and ignored and is substituted with what they want to believe rather than what they ought to believe.

If there are no consequences of sin then many of the statements of Jesus Christ are meaningless. It was Jesus who said, "Fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46). Hear the apostle, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). Escape what? What do these scriptures and many others signify if they have no reference to the consequences of sin? How ridiculous to talk about heaven as a place where the righteous will be rewarded, and yet deny hell the place where the wicked will be punished. If there are no grave consequences to sin, why pay such an infinite price to redeem us from it? If there is no hell, in which to suffer the consequences of sin, there is no heaven in which to reward the righteous. The only reason in the world we have for believing there is a heaven is because it is revealed

in the Bible; and yet the same Bible that reveals heaven also reveals hell, as a terrible and awful certainty for sin.

It is wonderful how sin will blind and prejudice a man, so as to cause him to close his eyes to unmistakable evidence, because that evidence does not happen to reveal what he wants to believe. For illustration: A man dies testifying that angels have gathered at his bedside to escort him to the land of bliss, that he hears the sounds of heavenly music, and so on. Every member in this man's circle of friends will believe his testimony; and they delight to call attention to his victorious and triumphant death. Nobody questions his being rational, and in his right mind, but let the same man die, and testify that devils are standing at his bedside, waiting to drag his soul down into the darkness of hell, and immediately they all begin with one consent to make excuse; he is delirious, he is not rational, it is the effects of medicine, he is hysterical, and so on. Why accept the testimony of one and repudiate the testimony of the other? If both are rational and in their right mind, both

testimonies are of equal value, and equally true.

But what is the final consequence of sin? It is hell! Then, what is hell? Is it annihilation? Is it the grave? Is it present consequences only? We have not the time or space to discuss this matter here, though abundant reasons could be given, as well as scripture proofs, which show conclusively that hell is no one of these, or all of them combined. In fact, we doubt if God ever annihilates anything. If He did, He would likely have in mercy annihilated the devil long ago. If annihilation was the consequence of sin then the wicked would have no more to fear in offending than in pleasing God; and in times of distress and sorrow would long for hell, which would forever end their sufferings. If annihilation were the consequences of sin then all sinners would be punished alike, for there are no degrees in annihilation. This is directly contrary to the teaching of scripture as seen in the following: Luke 12:47, 48; 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; and 2 Cor. 5:10, and many others. If annihilation is the consequence of sin, then the scripture is indeed very misleading, for we have the testimony of

one suffering the result of his sins, who felt, saw, talked and used all the senses he possessed in this life, all of which is impossible in a state of annihilation. Is it possible that there is no difference in punishment that comes to an everlasting end, and punishment that is everlasting?

We cannot make the grave hell, without making many scriptures appear ridiculous. If the grave is hell, then when Jesus said it were better for you to have your eyes plucked out, or your hands cut off than to go into hell, He meant only that you had better have your hands cut off and eyes plucked out than that you should be buried, or worse yet when the rich man prayed in hell for someone to warn his brothers, "lest they come to this place of torment" he only meant that he did not want his brothers buried. What nonsense! What a travesty on God's holy Word! By what kind of legerdemain or grammatical jugglery can, "I am tormented" mean annihilation, or the grave? What kind of perversion of the Word of God is it that will make such terms as torment and punishment mean annihilation, how can a creature that has no existence suffer,

be tormented or punished? We would like to discuss these matters fully, but it is not our purpose to do so here.

If the grave is hell, and the only consequence of sin we shall meet, then the righteous go to hell the same as the wicked, for they all go to the grave. Hence, the righteous suffer the consequences of sin the same as the wicked. What nonsense! When God wants to tell His intelligent creatures what the result of their sins will be He is not at a loss for words to do so. He must use, however, such terms, and figures, and comparisons as we are familiar with, so we can understand Him; and what an array of terms he uses. They swing across the guilty sinner's path today like a red lantern of danger, warning him of sin's terrible consequences, in such awful language as, "outer darkness," "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," "the worm that dieth not," "no rest day nor night, forever and ever," and so on. Oh, who can picture the significance of these awful statements of Holy Writ What an indescribable place hell must be! Or, is it possible that none of these statements mean what they say:

Nay, reader do not flatter yourself that you shall escape the consequences of sin, on the ground that these awful and startling statements do not mean what they say.

Away with the doctrine of no hell, no consequence for sin! Jesus declares the inevitable result of sin. It is declared by Moses and the prophets, by Paul the apostle, by Peter, John, Jude and others. In fact no truth is more clearly revealed in the Bible than this. Away with the idea that it is not scriptural!" No greater preacher of the consequences of sin ever lived than Jesus. Say not we are unkind and cruel when we tell you the truth. We had better be called cruel for telling the truth than to be called kind for not preaching it. God help the human race! The issue is before us. We must face it. It is true, it is true, "The wages of sin is death!"

Let the imagination, if it will, encircle the universe. Let it vault the heavens! Let it sink to the depths of hell! Let it fly from world to world! Let it delve into the secrets of science, and pry into the unfathomable depths of knowledge! But do not prostitute God's holy Word. Do not wrest the scriptures

to your own damnation. Do not lose the way of life. Do not miss the way to heaven. Do not stumble into the hell of the lost. Do not suffer the consequences of sin. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Break with it here and now.

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